


THE  
DUTY and BLESSING  
OF A 2. 75. 8  
*Tender Conscience:*

Plainly Stated,  
AND  
Earnestly Recommended  
To all that regard Acceptance  
with God, and the Prospe-  
rity of their Souls.



---

By *T. Cruso.*

---

*Vox Clamantis in Deserto. Pag. 44.*

*Procul à nobis absint non solum Crimina,  
sed omnis Criminum Suspicio, & vel  
prima facies Vitiorum.*

---

LONDON,  
Printed by J. R. for J. Salusbury, at the  
*Rising Sun* in Cornhil, near the Royal  
Exchange. MDCXCI.

THE  
DUTY and BLESSING  
OF A  
Tender Conscience

Plainly Searched  
AND  
Carefully Recommended  
To all that regard Acceptance  
with God, and the Eternity  
of their Souls.

894.110

Vox Clementis in Deserto. Pag. 44.  
Procedit a nobis scriptum per Joannem Baptistam  
ad omnes Christianos, salutem in Christo sempiternam  
perpetua Pax et Misericordia.

LONDON.  
Printed by J. R. for A. Baldwin at the  
Royal Gun in Cornhill near the Royal  
Exchange. MDCXC.



# The Preface.

**A**S the sad Consideration of the too great and general decay of Serious Religion among a Crowd of Pretenders to it, (which I think, the ensuing Discourses if practically digested, might lead and help in some measure to cure) was the chief thing which first engag'd me in the choice of this Subject, and is that which induces me now to Publish it ; so I am not insensible that the very Title which it bears, is enough

## The Preface.

to expose it to the Ignorance of foolish men, and to draw the severest censure upon that which might more naturally conduce to their conviction. Multitudes of persons are so strongly prejudic'd against every thing of this kind, which thwarts their Licentious Principles and Courses, that the meer sight or sound of the Name, will raise their indignation, and blow up that wrath of man which does too powerfully obstruct the working of the Righteousness of God.

But I calmly expect the casting of flouds out of such Mouths, when I consider,

## The Preface.

der, that the principal Myste-  
ries of the Gospel have been as  
ill treated, as any thing that I  
have written here, can be ;  
Who does not know that the Do-  
ctrine of Regeneration and the  
Newbirth, (which is repre-  
sented by the Holy Ghost, as  
one of the Glorious things <sup>Psal. 87:</sup>  
spoken of the City of God) <sup>3. &c.</sup>  
hath been made the matter of  
Derision, and cavill'd at in a  
worser manner now, than it was  
by Nicodemus heretofore ?  
And therefore if any of the  
Reproaches of Christ do  
fall upon these Lines, I shall  
not onely rest satisfied in it as  
that which I look't for, but

## The Preface.

account it a greater mark of Honour and Reputation, than the most favourable Sentence from such corrupt and partial Judges would be.

Nevertheless I venture to say, that I hope better things from some, particularly from those, who first heard, and afterwards approv'd what is here offer'd to common view; and I hope it indeed the more, the less this performance is adapted to please the fancies of the wantonly curious. My sincere design in this, was the same which I trust I shall ever pursue in my whole Ministerial Work; viz. To commend  
my

## The Preface.

my self to every ones Con- 2 Cor.  
science in the sight of God; 4. 2.  
as that is the faculty which I  
have been here peculiarly exer-  
cis'd about, and indeavour'd to  
rectify, so I would make it the  
sole Arbiten of what I have  
done, and readily abide by its  
determination. If I had taken  
those methods in the Composure,  
which suit with the Genius of  
the present Age, it might per-  
haps have pleased a few upon  
that score, but would have  
profited none; The sayings of  
Heathen Orators and Philo-  
sophers seem to carry more  
authority with many, than what  
can be urg'd out of the Pro-  
phets,

## The Preface.

phets and Apostles ; but how little reforming efficacy those fragments of the Law of Nature have in comparison of the Dictates of Scripture, the conversations of these men for the most part do sufficiently speak.

And I take leave to add for the quickning of those that make a better Profession, into whose hands Providence may cast this Book, that if it should not attain that end of doing good, which I have framed it to serve, it will besides my intention, have the quite contrary effect of doing evil : As every word of God shall certainly accomplish something or other, to our advantage

## The Preface.

vantage or our hurt ; the like may be said of all Writings of this nature too ; if a careful and diligent improvement be made, it may give occasion of everlasting praise and thankfulness in Heaven ; but if after a sleight and cursory perusal, any should imagine that the work is done, and the purpose answer'd, without the least resolution form'd, or endeavour us'd, to regulate their future practice, it will tend to aggravate the torment of self-reflexions in Hell. I humbly intreat therefore every one, as I solemnly charge my self, to look upon these things not as Noti-

## The Preface.

ons to be onely lodg'd in the  
Mind, but as Rules to be ob-  
served in the Life ; seconding  
this Injunction and Request  
with my hearty Prayers to the  
God of all Grace, that such  
lively impressions of the follow-  
ing Truths may be made upon  
the Hearts both of Author,  
and Readers, as effectually to  
prevent their rising up in  
Judgment against the one or  
the other.

T. C.

May 4. 1691.

THE



The Duty and Blessing



THE  
Duty and Blessing

O F A  
Tender CONSCIENCE.

2 Kin. 22. 19. first clause:

Because thy Heart was tender, —

**T**H E Excellent Person  
whom these words con-  
cern, was one of the  
best of the Kings of Judah, and  
the youngest who ever sat upon  
that Throne, being but eight  
years

ver. 1.

years old, when he began to Reign. God had much work for him to do, and therefore brought him to the Government betimes. About three hundred years before, (as some compute) even in the dayes of *Jeroboam*, when the Kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah* were first divided, he was spoken of *by name*, as a Prince that should be a zealous Reformer. In the eighth year of his Reign, (and sixteenth of his Life) he gave manifest proofs of his *enquiring early after God*; and in the twelfth year of his Reign, he vigorously set about the purging of the Land, and abolishing of Idols. When he came to his eighteenth year, he applied himself to the repairing of the Temple, in which work nothing remarkable had been done since the dayes of *Jehoash*.  
He

1 Kings  
13. 2.

2 Chro.  
34. 3.

2 Kings  
12. 5.

He now sends his principal Officers of State to *Hilkiah* the High-Priest, with necessary orders for this purpose, and while they who had the oversight of this affair were searching among the Ruines, the *Original Book* of the ver. 8. Law written by *Moses* was Providentially found.

It is very probable, that some of the preceding Idolatrous Kings had sought to burn all the Copies of the Law they could meet with; and therefore that which God had ordered to be laid up in the side of the Ark, Deut. 31. might be taken thence in those 26. persecuting times by some faithful Priests, and hid in a more secret place for the use of Posterity. This valuable Treasure, which had been lost a great while, being now seasonably recover'd, and brought to light, was

was delivered to *Josiah*, who upon the reading of it, immediately *rent his cloathes* : (which was the outward expression of an extraordinary inward commotion) Some transcripts, or at least some *broken pieces* of this Sacred Volume, 'tis likely had been preserv'd, and come to his view before, or else he would have scarcely done so much, and gone so far as he did ; but he was struck with reverence to this most Authentick Book, and perhaps wrought upon the more by those *affecting passages*, wherein Idolatry is so severely threatened.

Lev. 26.  
Deut. 28.

*Huldah* the Prophetess is here-upon consulted, what would be the best course to prevent the *Judgment written* ; and the reason of consulting her seems to be intimated in those words ;

Now

## of a Tender Conscience.

5

Now she dwelt in Jerusalem in ver. 14.  
the Colledge. The King was very earnest and impatient to be satisfied in the matter, and she was near at hand; whereas Jeremiah, though he enter'd upon Jer. i. 2. his Office five years before, was, it may be, in some remoter part of Judah, and possibly, he continued yet at Anathoth, his Native Town, where we read, that he Prophesied, till they sought c. ii. 21. his life.

The Answer which Huldah sent back, referr'd partly to the People, and partly to Josiah himself. 1. To the People of the Land; letting them know, that they should fall under the ver. 15. 16, 17. Calamities which God had denounced in his Law, because of their former open Provocations, and their present feigned Repentance; for even now, though they

they were animated by a pious  
 Jer. 3. 10. Governour, they returned not  
 unto God with their whole hearts.

2. What related to the King,  
 was more comfortable and encouraging;  
 (as will appear in the progress of this Discourse;) he being of another Spirit, very differing from his degenerate Subjects; which is here set forth at the very beginning of that part of the Message, *Because thy Heart was Tender, &c.*

That by the Heart in this place, the Conscience is especially meant, is too plain to need any laborious proof, and therefore the promiscuous use of those words will require no studied Apology. The Scripture does abundantly justify such an interpretation; as to which, two instances onely shall be given. *Salomon* told *Shimei*, that he knew

## of a Tender Conscience.

7

all the wickedness which his heart <sup>1 Kings</sup>  
was privy to, which he did to <sup>2. 44.</sup>  
David his father; i. e. his Con-  
science could not but witness  
against him, the Curses and Re-  
vilings which his Mouth had ut-  
ter'd. So the Beloved Apostle  
speaks of the Heart condemning, <sup>1 Joh. 3.</sup>  
and not condemning; which must <sup>20, 21.</sup>  
be understood of the Judgment  
which Conscience passes, either  
for, or against us.

The main Doctrinal Observa- Obs.  
tion which the words offer to us,  
is this, that *Holy Tenderneſs of*  
*Heart is ſuch a frame and diſpo-*  
*sition, as God highly approves and*  
*rewards.*

In handling which, I propoſe  
this Method. To ſhew

I. What

- I. What are the Counterfeits of it.
- II. What is the true Principle upon which 'tis founded.
- III. What are its proper Ingredients.
- IV. What are the Means which help towards it.
- V. What are the Tokens and Evidences whereby it is discover'd.
- VI. Wherein does its Pleasingness to God appear.
- VII. Why does it find such Acceptance with him.
- VIII. Apply it.

- I. *First*, To shew, what are the deceiving *Counterfeits* of this blessed frame. There are Images of two kinds, which the Devil sets up in the room of it: In shaping the one he comes very

*short,*



## of a Tender Conscience.

9

*short*, in the other he strives, as it were, to exceed the real Christian Temper. Sometimes it is *shrunk* below its due and necessary proportion, at other times it is *stretcht* too far. On both hands the Errour is mischievous, but especially that which consists in *Defect*.

First, Men may be too often I.  
deluded with Counterfeits of this Grace, which do not come up to the truth of it. As in the following particulars.

There is a *softness of Constitution* which is sometimes mistaken for holy Tenderneſs; and this shews it self two ways, either by a compassionate regard to the miseries and distresses, or by a forward compliance with the suggestions and persuasions of others. I.

I. There

## The Duty and Blessing

1. There is a common *pity and compassion*, with respect to the calamities of other persons, which may sometimes in a more than ordinary measure break forth from the unsanctified. All wicked men are not such *Nabals*, as to be stript of Humanity; and *Humanity* in an eminent degree does too often pass for *Christianity*, with those who discern not between *things that differ*. Multitudes put on *Bowels* to them that are in distress, whose Hearts do still remain *as a stone* in the matters of God, and their own Salvation; they are greatly affected with the sight of *suffering objects*, and yet their *sight* is never before them; they are presently *toucht with the feeling* of anothers *infirmities*, but harden'd against the sense of their *own pollutions*. *Pharaohs Daughter* when

of a Tender Conscience.

11

when she saw *Moses in the flags*, though she concluded him to be one of the *Hebrew Children*, was moved with pity towards him; and yet we cannot argue from thence, that the *Plague of her Heart* was *beal'd*, any more than her *Fathers*. Ex. 2. 6.

2. There is a *readiness of compliance* with what others suggest and perswade us to, which some persons may miscall *Tenderness*. Such easie tempers are to be found in the World, that melt like *Wax* to every *flame*, and are prepar'd to receive the *impression* of every *Seal*. All Sinners are not equally refractory and stubborn; but some will lend an attentive Ear to serious admonitions, and just *when they are instructed*, will *smite upon their thigh*, but these promising appearances come to nothing. They

They seem *flexible* to good, but they will not *stand bent* towards it ; they will give their consent to holy motions *for the present*, but when the next Temptation comes, that consent is withdrawn and revok't ; as *Saul* seem'd to be convinc't of the Innocence of *David* sometimes, and yet soon after pursued him as a *Traitour*. These very men that are brought over with so little pains to justify Religion, are also carried away as easily by others to practise contrary to it ; they whom we think so much inclin'd to *yield to God*, are as forward to *give place to the Devil* ; if they be apt to hearken to the dictates of Christian Friends, they are as prone to *walk in the counsels of the Ungodly*. If *Zedekiahs* Princes will have the *Prophet*

1 Sam.

24. 16.

with 26.

2.

Jer. 38. 5. *Jeremy* put to death, *He is not* the

## of a Tender Conscience. . . 13

the man that can do any thing against them.

There is a formal Humiliation 2.  
under the threatening or prospect of approaching ruine, which common beholders are apt to think better of than it deserves, being short of that Tenderness which the Holy Ghost does aim at here. When *Ahab* heard the terrible things, which *Elijah* pronounc't against him and his House, he fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly; i. e. after the manner of deep Mourners, whose Spirits are mightily seiz'd with the loss which they bewail. Any one who saw that King of *Israel* in this afflicted posture, would have been ready to imagine, that the *Rock* was really struck, and that these were fruits meet for Repentance; for God puts the case to the very Prophet,

1 Kings  
21. 27.

ver. 29. phet, *seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself?* And yet the *statutes of Omri were kept still*, and none of the sins were indeed forsaken, for which all that sorrow was pretended. Some are

Pl. 65. 8. *so afraid at Gods tokens*, that they instantly fall at his feet, and lye in the dust before him; and if there be any *wickedness in their hands*, they will put it away from thence, but still it is *sweet in their mouths*, and safe in their bosomes. They that pass to and fro on the great Waters though little acquainted with Religion at other times, may be quicken'd by danger to something of Devotion, and to see necessity of cleansing from their sins: *By reason of breakings* (of furious agitations of the Sea) *they purifie themselves.*

Job 41.  
25.

There

## of a Tender Conscience.

15

3.

There is a meer *legal broken-*  
*ness*, which is the effect of ser-  
le horror, and a *Spirit of*  
*indage*, whereby men may be  
receiv'd and impos'd upon; but  
*evangelical Tenderness* is quite a-  
nother thing. Some when they  
hear, or think of the *words of*  
*this Curse*, and consider how  
*deadly* it is to fall into the hands  
of God, and to fall under the  
wrath to come, and yet how  
impossible it is in their present  
course and condition to escape  
it, they are cast into *fits of trem-*  
*bling*; from the *Law* they have  
the *knowledge of sin* it self, and  
of the dismal consequences of it;  
and when they look within, they  
plainly apprehend that their own  
case is infinitely hazardous, and  
no more for *Wrath*, than for  
*conscience sake*, sin grows a lit-  
tle into dislike, only under the

B

notion

ver. 29.

phet, seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself? And yet the statutes of Omri were kept still, and none of the sins were indeed forsaken, for which all that sorrow was pretended. Some are

Pl. 65. 8.

so afraid at Gods tokens, that they instantly fall at his feet, and lye in the dust before him; and if there be any wickedness in their hands, they will put it away from thence, but still it is sweet in their mouths, and safe in their bosomes. They that pass to and fro on the great Waters though little acquainted with Religion at other times, may be quicken'd by danger to something of Devotion, and to see necessity of cleansing from their sins: By reason of breakings (or furious agitations of the Sea) they purifie themselves.

Job 41.  
25.

Then



of a Tender Conscience.

15

3.

There is a meer *legal brokenness*, which is the effect of servile horreur, and a *Spirit of bondage*, whereby men may be deceiv'd and impos'd upon; but *Evangelical Tenderness* is quite another thing. Some when they hear, or think of the *words of this Curse*, and consider how *dreadful* it is to fall into the hands of God, and to fall under the wrath to come, and yet how impossible it is in their present course and condition to escape it, they are cast into *fits of trembling*; from the *Law* they have the *knowledge of sin* it self, and of the dismal consequences of it; and when they look within, they plainly apprehend that their own case is infinitely hazardous, and so more *for Wrath*, than *for Conscience sake*, sin grows a little into dislike, only under the

B

notion

Acts 24.  
25.

notion of a pernicious formidable evil. It is probable enough that *Felix* had not been moved by *Paul's reasoning of Righteousness and Temperance*, if the Apostle had not inserted that pungent Discourse of a *Judgment to come*; this gave an edge to the other parts of the Sermon, and cut the Spirit of the Governour, but it was heal'd again too quickly after. When men are *dissolv'd* by such Arguments meerly, their *hardness is not cur'd*; the work of the Law is ordinarily necessary in some measure by way of Introduction, but of it self it is not sufficient; the chief motives of the Gospel, which must perfect the change, are of another sort.

4. There may be a *cautious shunning* of some sins, joyn'd with a *confident rushing* upon others, which

which is no better than a shew  
of Tenderneſs ; for that which is  
*true*, is univerſal. Our Saviour  
reprov'd the Pharifees, for *ſtrain-* Mat. 23.  
*ing at a Gnat, and ſwallowing a* 24.  
*Camel* ; there is indeed a double  
evil in this. 1. It is a ſign of  
real *Hypocriſie* in the *perſons*  
*themſelves*. 2. It tempts other  
men to think that *all Religion* is  
ſo. This was frequent among  
the *Jews* ; they would quietly  
omit the *weightier matters* of the  
Law, and rigorouſly inſiſt upon  
the *leſſer*. They would not ne-  
glect the paying of *Tithes* for  
the *ſmalleſt Herbs* in their own  
Gardens, and yet could *devour*  
*Widows houſes* without remorse.  
They exclaim'd againſt the Diſ-  
ciples for *gathering a few ears of*  
*corn on the Sabbath day*, when  
their whole Religion ran up in-  
to the *barren ſtalk* and *empty*  
blade



blade, of an external Profession. They thought it a crime not to *garnish the Tombs of the Prophets*, and yet counted it none to *kill the Lord of Life*. They boggled not at the giving of *Money to betray innocent Blood*, but were against the *receiving* of it, when the desperate wretch whom they had hir'd, came and threw it back. So, *Herod* was very shy of violating his *Oath* to a lascivious Damsel, but too resolute in the beheading of a *just man and an holy*. Nay, the Servants of God also have been sometimes too remiss and faulty in this point, which hath blemisht them more than any thing besides. *Bathsheba* took care to *purifie her self* from a *Ceremonial uncleanness*, and yet did not start at a *Moral pollution*. Yea, it would have been well, if *David's heart*

2 Sam.

11. 4.

of a Tender Conscience.

19

*heart had smote him* as soon after his *Adultery and Murder*, as it did after the *cutting of Sauls skirt*, and his *numbering of the people*. 1 Sam. 24. 5. 2 Sam. 24. 10.

There may be a *strict forbearance* of the visible and open acts of sin, and yet no such tenderness wrought in the Heart, as there ought to be. Common restraints, or the care of a Mans Reputation or Worldly Interest, may influence him to this, and yet he may not have the least tincture of *godly fear*. Whosoever does secretly harbour sin, he hath the *spot of the Devils Children*, though he do not publickly commit it ; as *Rachel*, when she *sat upon the Images* to conceal them, was scarcely more innocent, than if she had been making a *Religious use* of them. If the *Church* could not have

B 3

purg'd

Pfal. 44.  
18.

purg'd her self from that guilt which God will *search out*, as well as from that which men might perceive, the profession of her uprightness might have been easily contradicted; but as *their steps had not declined from Gods way*, so *their hearts were not turned back*. Counterfeit tenderness looks no further than the regulating and forming of the outward actions according to the Word of God, while the inward thoughts and affections are permitted to take their own unbridled course. The remembrance of sin is pleasant to such, though the *practice* be uneasy; they *rowl it under their Tongue*, though they dare not bring it forth; they avoid (it may be) the staining of their *Conversations*, but regard not the defiling of their *Consciences*. For the  
affronting

of a Tender Conscience.

21

affronting and dishonouring of God is not so much to them, as the blasting or diminishing of *their own good name.*

Secondly, It is possible that men may be cheated and deceived by Satan, under the pretence of necessary tenderness, with those things on the *other hand*, which are *carried beyond* all just and reasonable bounds. As particularly,

This tenderness which the Spirit of God commends, is not an *affectation* of being *righteous overmuch*; I mean, of exceeding the Commands of God, and a pretending to greater strictness than is enjoyn'd. This is generally of very mischievous consequence; from one extream men soon run to another, from *uncommanded severities*, to *forbid-*

## The Duty and Blessing

*den licentiousness*: They *screw up* the Precept farther than God design'd it, and instead of keeping it at that *height*, they notoriously *break* it. When men fasten their own additions to the Word, and think to be Religious *above what is written*, the Devil hath the greatest advantage of thrusting them down into Prophaneness. Duty is to be done *with all our might*, but the declared will of God is the measure and standard of Duty. If we enlarge our own task, and *increase our own burden*, that's the way to neglect and *shake off all*. We should therefore see that we do not *make* Duties or Sins, where God hath made *none*, lest we come to reckon those things *as no* Duties or Sins, which are *truly so*.



of a Tender Conscience.

23

It is not a troubling or tormenting of our selves with frivolous and groundless Scruples, and so living in melancholly bondage all our dayes. This may be indeed an indication of Grace, but yet 'tis an *Infirmity*, like the *tenderneſs of Leahs eyes*, and makes the Soul to *refuſe that comfort and ſatisfaction*, which it ought to receive. At this rate, Conſcience muſt alwayes be *removed far from Peace*, and every triſle, yea every nothing, will give us as much diſturbance, as the moſt terrifying reality. *Fearing to offend*, where *no reaſon of fear is*, muſt needs be accounted rather an inſtance of weakneſs, than perfection. *Peter had a rebuke for calling that unclean, which God had cleaſed*; and no man is to be commend-

2.

Acts 10.

15.

ing of himself, when the case is so plain, that 'tis onely his own perplexity which obscures it. What is this, but to stumble upon caven ground, or chuse to walk in pain, like the Traveller with a Stone in his Shoe, when he ought rather to sit down, and endeavour the taking of it out? God does no where put us upon flying from shaken leaves, or turning innocent things into grieving thorns, and piercing swords; he that does so, imbitters his Life through his own folly; for a man may spend all his years upon the rack, if he will indulge every dark imagination that rises up in his Mind. That Rule of the Apostle is of a larger extent, than the single Case, which it was laid down for; *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eating asking no question for conscience sake.*

1 Cor. 10.  
25.

It is not a yielding to any such doubts as would deter and hinder us from the Service of God, and Communion with him. This is not the work of the Spirit, but one of the *wiles of the Devil*, to put us out of our main business, and to rob us of our choicest priviledge. It may be, he raises a Question in some drooping Souls, that have been long exercised with his Temptations, and buffeted by his Messengers, Whether it were not better to intermit those acts of Worship, in which they must acknowledge so great a mixture of sin? He would perswade some, that the irreverent or blasphemous Thoughts, which are perhaps injected into Minds in Prayer, is an argument against the bowing of their Knees; or that the wanderings and distractions of their Spirits

Spirits in *Hearing*, through present multiplicity of *Secular Affairs*, is a reason why they should keep their foot from going to the House of God ; or that *confest unworthiness*, and *want of desir'd assurance* are sufficient bars to the *Lords Table*. These things, by Satans management, oftentimes do either *wholly obstruct* the performance of such Duties, or they make the *Knees* very *feeble* in them, and the *Hands* to *hang down* ; they take away much of the *Heart*, if they do not shut out the *Service*. Conclude therefore, that it is no branch of due *Tenderness* to call this point into dispute, Whether it be good for us to draw nigh to God ?

Psal. 73.  
28.

4.

An extraordinary sensible *compunction* in all persons at all times, is not absolutely requisite to holily

ly Tenderneſs As all have not equal *ſtrength of Grace*, ſo all have not equal *ſtock of Moiſture*; not the ſame command either over *Natural Paſſions*, or *Bodily Humours*. A Dry Brain (ſayes a Great Author) may frequently be matcht with a Tender Heart. I deny not, but that where this *Water* is, 'tis fit that it ſhould be *drawn* and *pour'd out before the Lord*: God teſtiſies of *Joſiah* in the Text, that he *wept before him*; and *David* ſayes, that he *watered his couch with his tears*, and *made his bed to ſwim* with them; and *Paul* could ſeldom *Preach* or *Write* without *many* of them; but theſe are not to be drawn into ſuch binding Examples, as if every one that attained not the ſame which they did, muſt be blotted out of the Roll of Chri-

Dr. Tho.

Manton

on Pſal.

119.136.

Pſal. 6. 6.

Acts 20.

19.

2 Cor.

2. 4.

Christians. I doubt not, but that many Hypocrites in the World *out-do* many real Saints in such external things : The Eye of a wretched deceiver may be an *overflowing fountain*, when the upright Soul is much more *straiten'd* in the expressing of it self after ~~that~~ manner. *Hard hearts* may weep, when the *softest* may not ; as the solid *pavements* at some seasons of the year may be *wet*, when the gentler *hangings* discover no such change.

5.

This tenderness does not oblige us to a renouncing or *laying aside of all prudence* and discretion in the choice of the *most important Duties*, when there is a *competition* of more than one at the same time. A Tender Heart should urge no man unadvisedly to engage in a *lesser duty*.

duty, when a greater offers it self. There ought to be an exercise of judgment, in considering, when there are divers calls, what God does most probably call to *at the present time*; and in weighing the circumstances of things, that we may do that which will be *most acceptable and useful*, though we leave other matters undone. It is true, that no good works are to be wilfully omitted, nor put off and suspended, unless necessity require: We are bound to do *all* that is commanded, and *when* it is commanded: *When thou saidst, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, &c.* but sometimes one Duty is *supplanted* by another, through the disposal of Providence, without any agency of ours; and the *preference* of one Duty to another becomes inevitable,

table, and if we study the nature of Duties well, it will not appear any unequal thing. *Instituted* Duties ought to give way to *Moral* ones, when they meet one another; 'tis a blameable tendernefs, when men will rather forbear an *act of Mercy*, than set aside the *offering of Sacrifice*, or rather let alone a *workpiece of Charity*, than perform it on the *Sabbath day*.

H. Secondly, To shew what is the true principle and foundation upon which a Tender Heart is built. The *summary Answer* might be; *Deep Conviction and sound Conversion wrought and maintained by God*. This Character given to *Josiah* cannot belong to any unconvinced or unconverted person in the World; *i. e.* it can belong to none, but what



## of a Tender Conscience.

31

what have come, and do continue, under the mighty Operation of God. But to open this more distinctly ;

First, Tenderness of Heart  
supposes *deep conviction*, as that which must go before, in order to the producing of such a frame.

The sword in Christs mouth must pierce (as it were) between the joints and the marrow, divide the soul and spirit asunder, and make such kind of wounds, as the regardless sinner never felt before.

When they heard this they were  
struck in their heart, and said

unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do ? Where the word does not enter thus, the Heart will remain hard still, and woefully insensible both of Sin and Duty. A sound which only passes by the Ear, signifies nothing,

## The Duty and Blessing

thing, more than a feather drawn over the Skin, till the Commandment comes with power, for the raising of mens stupid faculties out of their dead sleep. Christ told Judas that he had a Devil, and would betray him, yet Conscience never stir'd, so as to execute its office to any purpose. So long as men are alive and vigorous, chearful and confident, (as Paul was once in his natural condition) without the Law, this disposition of holy tenderness is not likely to spring up in them; and men may be truly said to be without the Law, though they have the outward dispensation of it, so long as they are not thoroughly convinc'd and humbled by it.

2. Secondly, It supposes a sound conversion; a real change of state and temper, an entire transformation

man  
crea  
that  
Cov  
ny h  
to p  
Wo  
lean  
inst  
of i  
it w  
thei  
grou  
into  
of  
firm  
into  
and  
is ch  
ing  
sinn  
conf  
like  
stiff

mation of the man into a new creature: This is the meaning of that excellent promise in the New Covenant; *I will take out the stony heart, (q. d. I will break that to pieces by the hammer of my Word) and will give them an heart of flesh.* Here is an Heart instead of an Heart; the quality of it so much alter'd from what it was, that it is perfectly another. It is like a turning of dry ground (as the Psalmist speaks) into water-springs; or a turning of Rocks into Rivers, the most firm and impenetrable substances into those which are most fluid and yielding. The maddest wirth is chang'd into the most afflicting sorrow; the most undaunted sinning into the most penitent confusion; that will which was like an Iron sinew, and stood stiff against the authority of God,

Ezek. 11.  
19.

Psal. 107.  
35.

God, is now most pliable and  
 submissive to it ; those affections  
 which were set upon the vile  
 lusts, and taken off from God  
 are now alienated as much from  
*them*, and linkt as closely to him  
 Such a *renewing of the mind* there  
 must be, a destroying of old ha  
 bits, and a planting of contrary  
 ones, if ever the Heart be truly  
 tender.

3. Thirdly, It supposes this Con  
 viction and Conversion to be  
*wrought by God*. Such high moun  
*tains*, as our Hearts naturally  
 are, (like vast heaps of filth ca  
*up in the way of the Lord*) will ad  
 not flow down at any presence but  
*his*. None is able of these stones  
 to raise up believing Children,  
 Spiritual Seed, to Abraham, but  
 only he. He against whom sin  
 is committed, must give saving  
 Repentance for sin ; he that  
 presse

pressed under us Metaphorically,  
 must cause us to feel the load of  
 our own defilements really; the  
 God in whose sight we are most  
 abominable, must bring us to loath  
 our selves. He fashioned the heart Prov. 21:  
 at first, and he can turn it which I.  
 as he pleases: It was formed by  
 his hand originally, and it is in  
 his hand still; i. e. it is under his  
 sovereign power, which he can  
 successfully exert in any case. It  
 is his work to incline and bow  
 the hearts of men, to things,  
 from which they were most a-  
 verse; (as the men of Judah who 2 Sam.  
 had stuck out so long, were 19. 14.  
 made unanimously to concur in  
 the invitation of David to re-  
 turn home to his People;) and  
 the secret invisible touch of his will  
 is effectual in this case; (so it  
 was with respect to that band of 1 Sam.  
 men, that went with Saul, after 10. 26.  
 he

he was chosen;) as the diseased woman in the Gospel, said within in her self, *If I may but touch his Garment, I shall be whole.* The weakest communication from God excels the strongest reasonings of men. He can operate upon the roughest Natures; make a sturdy Goaler to tremble before his Prisoners, and wash their stripes of

Acts 16.  
29.

4. Fourthly, It supposes, that what hath been wrought by God is yet maintained by him. The upholding of this frame principally depends upon the continued influence of the Grace of God every moment after its first production; and if those influences were stopt, the greatest tenderness would degenerate into worse hardness, than we labour under, as we come into this World. Souls that had been once thawed would freeze again

into a *thicker ice*, notwithstanding the best of humane endeavours to prevent it. That ground which hath been made *good*, and broken up, as it ought to be, would quickly prove as bad as the *stony* in the Parable, if not daily *mellowed with the showers* of Heaven, and *distilling dews* of the Blessed Spirit. The Earth which brings forth *kerbs*, is said Heb. 6.7. to *drink in the rain which cometh soft upon it*. Hence it is, that many degrees of this holy tenderness are *lost*, even in those that are converted, when God does but *take away his Spirit* in part from them; and sin does never so *easily beset them*, nor temptation with so little difficulty overcome them, as at those times.

III. The

III. The *third* thing, is to shew  
 What are the proper *Ingredient*  
 which *constitute* and make up  
 this tenderness of heart. There  
 are four things, in the connexi  
 on whereof, this holy Qualifica  
 tion here spoken of, does seem  
 to lye.

- I. First, *Hatred of sin*: He who  
 is not brought to *abhor that*  
*which is evil*, will not be so cau  
*tious* of it as he should be. While  
 sin is the object of desire, a man  
 will be more studious to *commi*  
 it, than to *escape* it ; it is much  
 more likely that he should watch  
 and seek *for* opportunities, than  
 resolve or strive *against* them.  
 An Heart that's tender in the  
 Scripture-sense, must be fill'd  
 with an holy indignation against  
 every thing that's contrary unto  
 God ; as *Joseph* cryed out, *Hon*



can I do this great wickedness, and  
 sin against God ? He could do  
 nothing willingly, but what he  
 could do lawfully ; there was a  
*Divine Antipathy* in his New  
 Nature to any known impurity.  
 As we are told, that *he who is* 1 John  
*born of God, cannot sin, because* 3. 9.  
*he is born of God ;* deliberate  
 allowed sin is against the very  
 complexion and tendency of his  
 Soul, as it is now settled by  
 Grace ; he perfectly detests it,  
 and therefore declines it. And  
 indeed this is a more infallible  
 test of a mans integrity, than  
 the meer *not sinning*, taken by  
 itself ; for a *wicked man* never  
 hates the evils which he forbears  
 to do ; a *good man* may be some-  
 times hurried to do the evils  
 which indeed he hates. Sin is Rom. 7.  
 more loathsome to the Saint than 15.  
 accidentally commits it, than to

C

the

the Sinner who for other *for-*  
*reign reasons avoids it.*

2. Secondly, *Love of Holiness.* No man but he that delights in good, will be duely tender as to sinful Omissions. Men will be glad of Excuses, when they take no pleasure in the work. If Religious Exercises are not a matter of delight, they will find out many inventions to stop the mouth of Conscience in laying on them aside. Unless we *come*, (as our Lord did, with a spontaneous chearfulness) *to do the will of God*, it will be no strange thing to see it often left *undone*. When Christ commanded his Hearers to pray, *that their flight* (in the destruction which he threaten'd to Jerusalem) *might not be on the Sabbath-day*; he seems to intimate, that though it were *unlawful* in a case of extremity

Mar. 24.  
20.

to make their escape upon that day, yet the Sabbath was to be so great a *delight*, that such an in-  
hindrance of enjoying it should be *grievous* to them : Spiritual Priviledges and Duties ought to be so much more pleasant and valuable to us, than our Natural Lives. The Wise Man gives us a charge, to *keep the Law*, *as* Prov. 7. 2. *the Apple of our Eye*, which is none of the tenderest and choicest parts in the Humane Body ; which men naturally take a peculiar care to guard, because of sight, whereof it is the Instrument, is the noblest Sense. God expresses his love to his people, by bestowing this character upon them ; *He that toucheth you* Zech. 2. 8 *th* sayes the Prophet to the Church) *toucheth the apple of his Eye* ; so should our love be to the ways of God, or else devi-

ations and diversions from them, will not much affect us.

3. Thirdly, *Fear of God*. This planted in the Soul, must be the *bridle* to hold us in, when corrupt Nature is ready to break out ; this must fortify and secure against temptations, when indwelling sin would betray and expose us to them. *Stand in awe and sin not*. This awe refers more to the *precepts*, than *threatenings* of the Word ; while an *impenitent heart* may be afraid of *Divine Judgments*, the tender heart is to *fear the Commandment*. There is a vast difference between the fear of punishment and the fear of offending ; the fear of coming under the *lash of Gods vengeance*, and the fear of *provoking the eyes of his glory*. It is this latter, which is the genuine Filial Fear ; a *Spirit of Fear*

Psal 4.4.

Prov. 13.  
13.

is not only consistent with a *Spirit of Adoption*, but even proper to those, who *call on the Father*, as such. *Devils tremble*, and yet boldly adventure upon sin; *Angels*, confirm'd in their holy state, *dare not* do any thing unsuitable to their spotless Nature, or offensive to the Majesty whom they attend upon. When our Souls are become like *fleshy tables*, for the Righteous Law to be *stamp'd* and *engraven* on, the very thoughts of displeasing the Maker of that Law will be enough to keep us back from breaking it, though there were no penalties annexed to it. They that have received a kingdom of which cannot be moved, (in title, and in hope) serve God with reverential fear, though not with that which is distrustful and tormenting; they doubt not their

Jude 9.

Heb. 12.

28.

Reward, but yet take heed to approve themselves to their Rewarder.

4. Fourthly, *Jealousy of our selves*.

A tender heart is very inquisitive and watchful, that it may not be mistaken in its own state.

2 Cor.  
11. 2.

This is styled by the Apostle Paul a *Godly jealousy* : 'Tis necessary

to persons professing Godliness, and 'tis useful in the exercising of themselves to it; 'tis a Godly jealousy, in opposition to wicked security, and careless presumption.

So long as we trust in our own hearts, and build up vain confidences upon sandy bottoms

we shall never arrive to the *firmness*, which must commend us to God, and preserve us from the snares of Satan.

1 Tim.  
5. 19.

Laying up in store for our selves a good foundation against the time to come must be our great design, and dili

diligent endeavour : And seeing there are so many *false foundations* which we are solicited to lay, this plainly includes, that we should be often seriously examining, whether ours which we have chosen, be sound or no. If the *heart* by nature be *deceitful above all things*, (so that nothing in the world can parallel its treachery) an heart mollified by Grace, will above all things look to this, that it be not *actually deceiv'd*. A truly contrite Spirit will be daily searching into it self, that it may be found a *Spirit without guile*. Jer. 17. 9.

The *fourth* thing, is to shew, IV.  
what are the *means*, which by divine management, *help towards* such a frame in us. (What course we are to take, and what methods

thods we are to use, shall be afterwards consider'd ; but here I would open, how God is pleas'd most usually to bring this about in *his Dispensations*.) There are four things which occur most remarkable here.

1. First, *Providential warnings*.

God many times by *visiting sin upon others* in his Childrens sight, gives a seasonable and happy Allarm to them ; he *strikes* their Neighbour, that they may feel. It was the express reason of the execution of many *Judicial Laws* among the *Jews*, upon capital Offenders, *that all Israel might bear and fear, and do no more presumptuously*. The hopes of Impunity lurking in the hearts have a strange influence in the debauching and perverting of it ; but when we see Judgment come so near to us, as to seize up

Deut. 17.  
13.



on him that *stands by us*, the root of that temptation is very much torn and loosen'd. When *Joabs field was set on fire*, tho' the flame did not reach his person, he quickly went to *Absalom* to know the meaning of it; so the severity of God hovering about us, though it does not actually touch us, may be sanctified to the reviving of those holy impressions on the Soul, which had been too much worn out by the *deceitfulness of sin*. Gods *smitting of wicked men in the open view of others*, though it be an aggravation of their punishment, is very often an act of Mercy to those that behold it. Persecuted Saints are a *spectacle of scorn* to the World, but the condemned World are made a *sign for the admonition of the Saints*. God does in effect say, 'Thus you

2 Sam.

14. 30.

31.

Job 34.

26.

## The Duty and Blessing

‘ must look that I should deal  
 ‘ with you, if this do not quick-  
 ‘ en you to *be zealous and re-*  
 ‘ *pent* ; the same, or worse Ca-  
 ‘ lamities are in store for you, if  
 ‘ the examples of these sufferers  
 ‘ do not make sin more odious  
 ‘ and uneasy to you.

2. Secondly, *Personal Corrections*. God knows, that there is a necessity sometimes of using *sharpness* with his own, to bring them to their *right mind*, and keep them in it. Though there is a great unlikeness between the case of good and bad men in this particular ; as there are very manifest degrees of *hardness* in Natural things ; and as *short slumbers* do differ from the *spirit of a deep sleep*. Bad men are scarcely awaken’d but by some amazing stroke, or by the *thunder of Gods Power*, as men in a

*Lethargy*

*Lethargy* are not rows'd without some more than ordinary noise; whereas good men are wrought upon by more gentle means. It must be the tormenting sting of some deadly *Scorpion* which recovers any sense in the one, but the smart of a *Rod* will be sufficient, through Grace, to the other. And so much we find by many instances, is both proper and needful; for God beats with few or with many stripes, as he sees occasion; he throws us into an hotter or cooler *Furnace*, according as we have more or less need of melting. He does not delight in causing his Children (as some barbarous Idolaters did theirs) to pass through the fire, but when the case requires it, he performs his work upon them by it. *Job*, in his prosperity, seems to have been swell'd a little.

Job 29.  
18.

a little too much with carnal confidence ; (as one may guess by his own words, *Then I said I shall dye in my nest, &c.*) but when his troubles came upon him, and he was prickt with the briars of affliction, his heart was made soft. For this reason, our breaking by the hand of God, is a greater Mercy, than if we were whole and untoucht.

3. Thirdly, *Spiritual Conflicts*. These are a very grievous exercise for the present, but of great use and service to Souls in the event of them. A wounded Spirit is difficult to bear, but after God hath heal'd it again, the effects are sweet and saving. If any gradual improvements had been possible to Jesus Christ, (who had a fulness of Habitual Grace from the first, and received not the Spirit by measure,) his bitter

## of a Tender Conscience.

51

bitter Agony under the apprehensions of Divine Indignation for mans sin, would have contributed more to the *quicken- ing of his understanding in the fear of the Lord*, (of which the Prophet speaks) than any thing besides. Great *searchings of heart* are wholesome remedies against that searedness which is so fatal to many in the World. Gods *hiding of his face* may bring these sins to our *view*, which we *overlookt* before, and prevent our future repetition of them. Christians are often made (in this sense) to *possess their iniquities*, that they may be the more freed from the *power* of them. God orders them for a while to *walk in darkness, and see no light*, that *works of darkness* may be more *hideous* and affrighting to them. *Dauids Repentance* was much *fur-*

Isa. 11.3.

Psal. 51.  
12.

further'd by Gods with-holding the *joy of his Salvation*. The temporary loss of *Comfort* is many times very gainful in respect of *Holiness*.

4.

Fourthly, *Sinful Miscarriages*. God would not permit such things, if he did not *design* to over-rule them to his own *Glo-ry*, and the good of his *Servants*, and if they were not *capable* of being so over-rul'd. When God hath put *Life* into us, and *set us upon our feet*, he would prevent our *falling again*, if those very falls, however evil in themselves, could not be so manag'd by him, as to bring about the most excellent contrary ends. Therefore he that hath *stumbled most foully*, is thereby excited afterwards to *walk the more softly*; and the man that hath been betray'd in-  
to more than ordinary sins since

his

of a Tender Conscience.

53

his Conversion, by prevailing  
reliques of Corruption, will be  
the more diligent to guard and  
keep himself for the time to come,  
that the wicked one may not touch  
him. Bruised parts, we know,  
use to be more tender than any  
others, and broken Bones (tho'  
restor'd and set again) will be  
frequent remembrancers of for-  
mer hurts, and provoke such as  
have them, to look well to their  
goings. The same Peter, who  
had disown'd and abjur'd his  
Master, through shameful cow-  
ardice, before a company of Ser-  
vants and inferiour persons, sig-  
naliz'd himself, after this, by his  
boldness, before the Rulers of Acts 4.  
the People; 'tis likely, that his 13.  
Courage in the Confession of  
Christ now, was rais'd by the  
thoughts of his former lamented  
renunciation; he that had said,  
in

in answer to single challenges, *know not the man*, now cries out

ver. 10.

*Be it known to you all, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, &c. Past Neglects tend to make me more sensible of their obligation to present Duties; and when Gods Servants have slipt most notoriously, they learn to order their steps the most exactly. As the Jews at this day flee from Idolatry, and will not swallow the least dust of the Golden Calf by which they heretofore transgressed, and thereupon are prejudic'd by Popery against Christianity; so it is with sincere Believers in all other cases. If any one hath wounded himself by running upon the edge of the seventh Commandment, that very wound will be useful to make him chiefly beware of walking after*

2 Pet. 2.  
10.



the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.

The *fifth* Head, is to enquire, V.  
What are the *Evidences* and *Tokens* whereby this *Tenderness* is *discoverable*. These are very *numerous*; and therefore instead of multiplying all that I might, I shall contract them into those which follow.

First, A *Zealous Concern* for I.  
the *Honour of God*, when it interferences, and stands in competition with *our own*; both in matters of *Faith* and *Practice*. This is an inseparable concomitant, and manifest sign of a *Tender Heart*. In *matters of Faith*, it makes a great discovery as to this point, when the *Glory of Freegrace* comes to be opposed to our own *Merit*, and the *Righteousness of Christ* to our own *Works*,

Works, and the Efficacy of the  
 spirit to our own Will. That  
 which exalts God, and vilifies  
 self most, will be most grateful  
 to one that hath been duely hum-  
 bled (like *Joshua* here) before the  
 Lord his God. *Paul*, who fell  
 to the Earth, when he was con-  
 verted, and saw more of his own  
 wretchedness, than thousands  
 do, was very careful not to fru-  
 strate the Grace of God; i. e.  
 not to represent it as an insigni-  
 ficant thing, or make it void, by  
 ascribing more than is meet to  
 man. He was quick in retract-  
 ing (as it were) any expression,  
 that might seem to diminish, or  
 trench upon, the honour of  
 Christ; I live, yet not I, but Christ  
 liveth in me. So in another  
 place; I laboured more abundant-  
 ly than they all, yet not I, but the  
 Grace of God, which was with me.  
 He

Gal. 2. 21.

.1.

ver. 20.

1 Cor.

15. 10.

He that will *cloud* the performances of the Redeemer, or the operations of the Sanctifier, for the *brightening* of his own, is under an ill symptom. Where the *mystery of Faith* is held in a *pure Conscience*, men are willing to *decrease* in their Personal Reputation, that their Lords revenue may *increase*. So, in *matters of practice*, Holy *Tenderness* will make men deny themselves to the very utmost, rather than not advance Gods interest in their places; *Sacrifice* all their credit and esteem, rather than clip his Authority, or mangle his Commands, & submit to be counted the *filth* of this world, that they may the better glorify him.

Secondly, A *strict Endeavour*, that both the *Ends* which we propose, and the *Means* which we

1 Tim.  
3. 9.

we employ upon all occasions, may be *alike good*. *Sinful ends* are not to be pursued in the use of the *best means*, nor will the *best ends* consecrate the use of *sinful means*. Corrupt intentions spoil the noblest actions; *tho* where the *heart is not right*, men only regard the *thing done*, and not the *motive or spring* of doing it. It is the *tender heart* which takes care to pluck out the *evil eye*; for if that remains, it will spread and diffuse its malignity into the whole *body* of the service. The *Apostle* complains of some perverse men, that *preach- ed Christ* indeed, (where the act without all doubt, was *materially good*), but they did it *out of envy and strife*, not sincerely, *supposing thereby to add affliction to his bonds*: (So that the aim and design was no better than *Devilish*,

Phil. i.  
15, 16.

Devilish, while the work was  
*Angelical*.) On the other side,  
wicked actions are not excused  
by the holiest intentions; there-  
fore God sayes, *I the Lord love* Isa. 61.8.  
*judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-*  
*offering.* He will not be made  
the receiver of what hath been  
procur'd by Injustice, nor coun-  
tenance our application of the  
effects of Rapine and Oppressi-  
on to the most Religious or Cha-  
ritable uses. Nothing does more  
prophane the holy name of God,  
than the *entitling* of him to such  
vile practises; which an *Anti-*  
*christian* Generation hath been  
very forward to do, *moulding*  
*the bread of life into every shape*  
for their own turn, and crying  
out, *Here is Christ*, when Satan  
hath cover'd himself under that  
Mantle; and by this, as much  
as any thing, they have justified  
that

1 Tim.

4. 2.

2 Sam.

21. 2.

Mic. 3. 10

3.

Prov. 28.  
21.

that Character, of having consciences seared as with an hot iron. God remembred Sams slaying of the Cibeonites, in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah, and revenged it a great while after. And we know, how God censures the Princes of Israel, that they built up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. Such a censure is studiously avoided, if the heart be tender.

Thirdly, A vigorous resistance of the most plausible and powerful Temptations. There is no tryal in this case, when the charm is weak, when the poyson is naked, when the suggestion is unsuitable to our particular inclination, or when the alluring recompence is small. They must be risen up to a prodigious height of wickedness indeed, that will transgress for a piece of bread;

bread; and sell the Godly poor  
 for a pair of shooes, which notes Amos 2.  
 of a very contemptible price; but 6.  
 when Temptation comes with a  
 mighty strength, and our com-  
 pliance with it is baited with  
 something extraordinary, then  
 our Tenderness is seen, in strug-  
 gling with, and getting the mas-  
 try of, it. Not that it is to be  
 imagin'd, that every such Temp-  
 tation shall be successfullly with-  
 stood, for then it would be pos-  
 sible, that we might live with-  
 out any sin; but many instances  
 both of resolute opposition, and  
 final victory may be given,  
 where it hath been most hazar-  
 dous and improbable. As our  
 Lord, with a great deal of holy  
 anger, refus'd the impudent mo-  
 tion of *falling down and worship-*  
*ing the Devil*, though enforc'd  
 with a prospect and promise of  
 all

*all the Kingdoms of the World :* So his Servants have imitated him in the like resolution, when Satan hath offer'd them very great enticements. *Life* is more to us than all the World, and yet that hath not prevail'd with Christs faithful Souldiers, to accept of deliverance upon unlawful terms. The Devils best and choicest Artillery can do less execution upon tender hearts, than his *slightest Weapons* against others.

Heb. 11.

35:

4. Fourthly, An *impartial shunning* of the *smallest sins*. These are wont to be overlookt, and let alone, by the most of mankind, though greater wickednesses are severely condemn'd; but indeed, as breaking with God for a little, does endanger his delivering of us up to worse and more hainous crimes, so it argues



argues a vile and wretched contempt of God, and unfaithfulness to him. *He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.* Luke 16. 10.

We ought alwayes to consider the greatness of the *person* forbidding, more than the aggravations of the *thing* forbidden : (As for Example ; *Who* it is that sayes, *Thou shalt not steal*, rather than *what*, or *how much* it is, which we are tempted to the stealing of.) And if our hearts are endued with that tenderness which becomes them, we shall do so. This will provoke us not only to avoid the *flames* of Lust, but the very *sparks*, that we may be not only not *consumed*, but not so much as *singed*, by it. Even *little sins* are great ones in the eyes of such persons ; they do not say, as *Jonathan* did, *I have but tasted a little honey* 1 Sam.

D

with 14. 43.

*with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and lo I must dye; but heartily consent and agree to this, that their Damnation is justly inflicted, by whom the least iniquity is knowingly allowed. We find, that Abraham*

Gen. 14. *would not take from a thread to*  
23. *a shoe-latchet of any thing that belonged to the King of Sodom.*

And, when Pharaoh yielded, that the people of Israel and their little ones should go and sacrifice to God, only their flocks should be stayed; Moses told him, that their cattle also should attend, and not an hoof be left behind. So far were the Churches planted by the Apostles from keeping the whole of the abolished Jewish Festivals, that

Exo. 10.  
26.

Paul tells the Colossians, that no man should judge them for part of an holiday. (As the word properly

ἐν μισθ  
ἡμέραις.  
Col. 2. 16.

perly imports, though our Translation renders it with disadvantage.) One of the *Ancient Church-Historians* tells us of *Marcus*, *Bishop of Arethusa*, Theod. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 6. who having destroyed an Idolatrous Grove in *Constantines* time, and afterwards in *Julians* Reign, being prosecuted for it, though they first exercised him with variety of Inhumane Tortures, such as scourging of his naked Body, dragging him thro' the filthiest places, piercing him with sharp-pointed Spears, besmearing him with Oil and Honey, and hanging him up in the heat of the day in the open Air for Bees and Wasps to fasten on, and at length proposed to him to repair what he had destroyed, or to furnish, at least, one half of the summe, (because they thought that his Poverty could

afford no more) or some *small portion*, what he could ; he peremptorily refused, and told them, that it would be as wicked a thing to give an *Half-penny* for such a purpose, as to give all that it required.

5. Fifthly, A *particular care in bridling the Tongue*, and setting a watch against those common unobserved evils, which are especially incident thereunto. I say, a particular care as to this, shews that the heart is tender ; because the Holy Ghost makes it the mark of a *perfect man*, not to offend in word ; and the Tongue, though a single Member, is represented as a *world of iniquity* ; and though a little Member, yet a most *unruly evil* ; and therefore he that *refrains his Lips*, may be reasonably supposed to take heed to all his other *brother* 2 C wayes

Jam. 3.2.

wer. 6.

wer. 8.

ways. Now this Tenderness concerns six things which are not generally so much minded, as they should be.

*Much Speaking.* Where Words are few, Guilt will be the less. I.

*In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin.* 'Tis a great wonder, if every part of overflowing Speech should be seasoned with salt, or if no idle Words break forth amongst such a crowd. As the very silence of the Scripture in many cases is instructive, (for several negative arguments drawn from thence have a force in them) so the holding of our peace sometimes may conduce to a better retaining of our integrity. How prudently sparing should we be, who are so apt to speak irregularly, and so unable to recall it, when 'tis once spoken!

Prov. 10.

19.

2. *Passionate Raging.* How often do the *Mouths* of such as call themselves Christians *come out* their own *shame*, to the scandal of Religion, when sinful wrath hath *heated* them! Speaking *furiously* and *unadvisedly*, can be hardly separated. Most are ready to think, 'tis a *venial* thing, and ought to be pass'd by, if any unfit expressions do *drop*, because their Passions were *boiling*; whereas on the contrary, the *door of their Lips* should have been guarded, because there was a *fire in their Bosoms*. When Anger is *broke loose*, our Tongues should be held in the *straiter*. Solomon deliberately pronounces that sentence, that a *fools wrath is presently known*.

Prov. 12.  
16.

3. *Foolish Jesting.* For want of holy Fenderness, this abounds too much in mens ordinary conversation.

versation. How many palpable  
*falshoods* are broacht, how many  
*prophane*, or *scurrilous*, or *immo-*  
*dest* passages are thrown out, for  
 the venting of a little imaginary  
*Wit*, and the promoting of a  
 mad sort of *Laughter*! How of-  
 ten are men not afraid of abu-  
 sing the *Sacred Writings* them-  
 selves, by an irreverent accom-  
 modation of peculiar *Phrases* in  
 them to vain and trifling mat-  
 ters! *Playing with the sword of*  
*the Spirit*, and prostituting the  
 words of the Holy Ghost, and  
 yet crying (with him that deceiv- Prov. 26.  
*eth his Neighbour*), *Are we not in* 19.  
*sport*? But they who desire and  
 intend that their discourse should  
 be *innocent* as well as *cheerful*,  
 will be sure to speak forth none  
 but the words of truth and sober-  
 ness at any time.



4.

*Rash Vowing.* Many persons are very prone *in* some deep distress, or instantly *after* some eminent deliverance, to be very liberal in the engaging of themselves to that which is more than ordinary, and from which they were free before; whereas in a little while, their heat and resolution *cools*, or perhaps the thing vowed proves more *inconvenient*, and comes nearer to an impossibility, than was at first expected. Such was *Jephtha's* case;

Judg. 11.  
31.

*Whatsoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, I will offer it up, &c.* and it was his *Daughters* lot to be that Oblation. The Wise Man warns against this; *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, &c.* The best way is, before *Vows*, to make enquiry; *i. e.* to consider seriously, what we may warrantably



stantly and willingly perform.

*Unregarded Promises.* It was 56

one branch of an admirable character given to a Reverend Per-

son (now with God), that he <sup>Howe</sup> <sup>Fun. Str.</sup> <sup>for Mr.</sup> <sup>R. F. P.</sup> <sup>46.</sup> was of such punctual fidelity, that his numerous appointments, even in the smallest matters were so

sure, that any one might as certainly depend upon them, as the constant returns of day and night, unless some extraordinary Providence did intervene. It is good

not to be too positive and peremptory, in saying, *We will do this or that*, without expressing a due reservation upon the account of Gods secret pleasure,

*if the Lord will*: As the Apostle <sup>1 Cor.</sup> Paul does frequently; and as <sup>4<sup>th</sup> 19.</sup> <sup>16. 7.</sup> the Apostle James enjoins us to <sup>Jam. 4.</sup> do. But when there is plain <sup>15.</sup>

*insincerity* in the case, that's far

worse than an unthought of Hin-

derance;

D 5

derance;

derance; and upon that score, we see *lavish professions* of the greatest kindness too often expiring in *niggardly accomplishments*: Men who take it ill to be *distrusted* in what they say, take leave to *confute* themselves. Now a Tender Heart, will not suffer a man to *change* or go back, tho' he hath *sworn* never so much to *his own hurt*.

Pf. 15. 4.

6.

*Needless Protestations.* He that feareth an Oath, will not in his common Language, approach too near to it, without necessity. There is a *solemnity* in *protesting*, which must not be made too cheap and vulgar. The man did *solemnly protest* to me, ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. So Josephs brethren interpreted his form of Speech, *By the life of Pharaoh, &c.* perhaps this was no more a *swearing*

Gen. 43.

3.

G. 42. 15.

swearing after the fashion of the Egyptian Court, (as some have condemned it,) than *Hannah's* phrase to *Eli*, *Oh my Lord, as thy soul liveth, &c.* And a very Learned Man judges it to be only an *Apprecation*, or Prayer for *Pharaoh's* life; *q. d.* *So let Pharaoh live, &c.* In short, we ought to be regulated by that Precept of our Saviour; *Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.* Not that we are superstitiously tyed to those terms, and to use no other; but the meaning is, that *ordinarily*, a bare affirming or denying should be lookt upon as sufficient. The most Conscientious persons maintain the credit of their Discourse, without any customary Asseverations.

I Sam.  
I. 26.

Dr. Light-  
foot's  
Works.  
Vol. I.  
p. 697.

Mat. 5. 37

Sixthly,

6.

Sixthly, A groaning under the bondage and burden of remaining Corruption. Where this is light and easie, 'tis a very suspicious token, that men are insensible. If we have really recovered our feeling, we shall feel inherent sin to be heavier, as well as apprehend our actual sins to be more, than the sand of the Sea. Though Satans strong-holds are cast down, yet the very ruines are more grievous and offensive to a spiritual man, than they can be to him that's carnal, while they stand entire, and before they are demolished. Saints are more afflicted with the remnants of sin, than others are for the uncontrouled dominion of it. Paul made bitter complaints, after he was brought into a Regenerate state, of his being sold under sin; whereas Ahab who

*sold*

Rom. 7.

14.

*sold himself to work wickedness,* <sup>1 Kings</sup>  
 being yet unrenewed, complain- <sup>21. 25.</sup>  
 ed not at all. A Tender Heart  
 could wish it self *out of the Body*  
 for this reason more than any  
 other, because while it is in the  
 Body, it is so *compassed with in-*  
*firmity,* and loaded with an *evil*  
*treasure,* which will never be  
*spent,* till Death comes to re-  
 quire our Souls. A *child of God*  
 is *heavy laden* by carrying only  
 the *rags of the old man* about  
 him, and longs to have the en-  
 cumbrance taken off. He is not  
 afraid of the *compleating of his*  
*Sanctification too soon,* (as *Augu-*  
*stine* while unconverted, when  
 he pray'd for healing Grace, se-  
 cretly desir'd that he might not  
 have a *speedy Answer*) but he is  
 more apt to fear, that it will be  
*deserr'd too long; i. e.* Sin is such  
 an irksome Companion, that he

is impatient to be rid of it.

7.

Seventhly, A bringing to mind of former evils with renewed shame and sorrow. If God hath put within us such a new Spirit, as the Text describes, we shall not easily forget *old sins*, tho' already repented of by us, and forgiven by God. The sins which he hath cast behind his back, will be in our sight still; and though we have escap'd the danger of future condemnation, it will not be a desirable thing to us to lose the memory and sense of past defilements. That thou mayst remember (says God) and be confounded, &c. when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done. Indeed we are never so apprehensive of our wretched unkindness to God, and of our base dissingenuity towards him, as when God hath brought us into a par-

Ezek. 16.  
63.

a pardoned state. We then see best, what Bowels we have spurn'd against, and what infinite Love we have ungratefully trampled on; for the more this Love is spread abroad in our hearts, the more is the conviction of our own vileness diffused also. And these penitent recollections of sin, after we have had reason to think that they are remitted, are the most genuine effects and certain signs of Gospel-tenderness; because then the mind is deliver'd from its first horrors, and yet is not stript of a serious remorse; as Pharaoh's Butler said after his release, *I remember my* Gen. 41. *faults this day, viz. the faults for* 9. *which he had been cast in Prison.* Paul long after his Conversion did both blush and bleed afresh (as it were) under the thoughts of former wickedness; he cries out,

1 Cor.  
15, 9.

out, *I am the least of the Apostles* not meet to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the Church of God. Those things which would have been very unfit for any others to *upbraid* him with, he humbly lays to his own charge.

8. Eighthly, A chusing rather to aggravate, than extenuate our own Crimes. As a tender heart will prompt us to *confess*, what the Charity of fellow-Christians should incline them to *cover*, so it will make us *heighten* that guilt in our acknowledgments, which other more favourable Judges ought to make *abatements* for. Though we should not bear *false witness* against our selves, any more than against our Neighbours, yet of the two it is much more excusable, and indicates a better disposition, to be too severe in self-accusations, than to be too
- mild*



*mild and gentle ; to take more  
 shame than is indeed due to us,  
 rather than less. Paul was re-  
 solved not to be guilty of that  
 left hand error, and therefore  
 he sets himself in the very upper-  
 most form of Criminals : Jesus  
 Christ came into the world to save* I Tim. I. 15,  
*sinners, of whom I am chief. Sin-  
 ners not yet subdued or soften'd  
 enough, seem willing generally  
 to spare their own Reputation  
 as much, and to give God as  
 little Glory by Confession, as  
 they can ; many times the half  
 of what their hearts are privy to,  
 is not told ; but as Zophar speaks  
 of the secrets of wisdom, so we* Job II. 6.  
*may say of concealed pollutions,  
 that they are double to that which  
 does appear, or is made known.  
 It is not so where an holy ten-  
 derness is wrought ; there men  
 are much more prone to go too  
 far*

Jer. 3. ult.

far in the exposing and censuring of themselves, than to *come short*; that they may be able to say with the Church, *Our confusion covereth us*; q. d. It is not only spread upon this or that *single part*, but we fall under it *through-out*. Such persons need not to be *painted blacker*, than their own *Tongues* prove them to be.

9.

Ninthly, *Meekness* under the *severest Chastisements*, and *thankfulness* for the *smallest Comforts*. If the heart be soft, this sentiment will be *deeply imprinted* on it, and the behaviour will be *fram'd accordingly*; that *whatsoever evil we receive from the hands of God*, we *deserve more and worse*; *whatsoever good we receive*, we *deserve not so much, and indeed nothing*. The Church *alwayes tastes some honey in abundance of gall*, and *freely owns* what

what the Prophet declar'd on the behalf of the Jews in the time of their Captivity: *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed,* and it is from his unexceptionable *Righteousness* that we are corrected. Where sin is a *light thing*, the lightest Affliction is thought *injurious*, and the weightiest Blessings are lookt upon as *inconsiderable*: Men think that God *deals hardly* with them, if he layes the hand of his Justice upon them *most sparingly*, or if he does not open the hand of his Bounty to them *very wide*. On the contrary, relenting Souls accept of every Punishment as *due*, and of the least Favour as *extraordinary*. Divine severities *sink easily* and silently, like stones that fall into a lap of Wooll; but the crumbs which drop from Gods Table,  
are

Lam. 3.  
22.

are highly valued. The *penitent Prodigal* does not repine that he had been pincht with *hunger in a far Country*, but was content to be entertained as an *hired servant in his Fathers house*. The *least smile* should excite our *Gratitude*, and the *roughest frown* calls for our *Submission*. Returning *Ephraim* bemoaned himself, that he had bore the *yoke* with such an *untamed Spirit*.

Luke 15.  
19.

Jer. 31.  
18.

10.

1 Theff.  
5. 22.

Exod.  
23. 7.

Tenthly, *Abstinence from the very appearances of evil* : This is an *Apostolical injunction* to be kept *alwayes in our eye*. So *Moses tyed up the Israelites to the most critical measures of Truth* ; *Keep thee far from a false matter* ; *q. d.* have nothing to do with that which looks like *disimulation*. The *stream* of our *honest intentions* should run so *clear*, that there may be no  
filth

filth at the bottom, which we are unwilling to have seen at the top. The rich *Israelite* was forbidden to be *as an Usurer* to his poorer Neighbour; i. e. to be guilty of no act, that carries in it so much as the resemblance of biting Extortion. The Apostle *Paul* commands his Son *Timothy* to rebuke the younger women with all purity; implying, that in his whole Discourse and Carriage there should not be the least shadow of levity or wantonness. And therefore (as one observes very well) *Titus* is directed to put the aged women upon teaching the young: As if it were less advisable to do it himself, not only because of the hazard, but scandal, of overmuch familiarity with a different Sex. We know, that *Hamans* falling on the bed where *Esther* was, was interpreted

c. 22. 25;

1 Tim. 5. 2.

Tit. 2. 4.

Capell  
of Temp-  
tations.  
Part 2.  
ch. 13.  
sect. 3.

Esth. 7. 8.

terpreted by the King, *as if he would force her*; it had such an *aspect*, though there be little ground to imagine, that it was his *design* at that time. A tender heart will be accompanied with the *plainest impressions* of Holiness, without so much as the *obscurest shew* of Wickedness.

I I.

Eleventhly, *Flying from the occasions of sin*, and incentives to it. He who is as fearful, as he ought to be, of *swallowing the Hook*, will take heed of *playing with the Bait*. When the Serpent first assaulted Eve, she made

Gen. 3. 3.

an excellent defence; *Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye dye.* We do not read indeed in the *Original prohibition*, any thing ex-

C. 2. 17.

prest

preſt as to the *touching* of the  
 Fruit, but the woman might ve-  
 ry reaſonably underſtand *this* to  
 be forbidden, as a ſtep or *intro-*  
*duction* towards eating; for 'tis  
 by no means probable, that ſhe  
 not being yet depraved or cor-  
 rupted, ſhould knowingly *add*  
 to the Word of God, or mali-  
 ciously *inſinuate* the ſeverity of  
 the Precept. Holy tendernels  
 will keep men at a diſtance from  
 the enſnaring Temptations, which  
 lead to ſin. It is a *ſtain* upon  
 the Righteous Soul of Lot, that  
 he choſe the *Land of Sodom* for Gen. 13.  
 the place of his *abode*, upon the 10.  
 account of its pleaſantneſs and  
 fertility, though the *men* were  
 ſo *exceeding wicked*, and their ver. 13.  
 Neighbourhood ſo infectious.  
 He ſuffered for it *twice*, in re-  
 ſpect of *Temporals*: (If he re-  
 ceiv'd no injury, as to *Spirituals*  
 alſo:

also : For who can tell, whether his *Drunkenness* might not be learnt from them ? *Fulness of Bread* was one of the *iniquities of Sodom*, why not *Excess of Wine* ?) First, his *Goods* were carried away among the rest, after the battle of the *Kings*, tho' retaken by *Abraham* ; and then they were finally consum'd in the destruction of *Sodom*, he being

—19. 17. bidden to escape for his *Life*. Chast and pious *Joseph* would

—39. 10. not hearken to his *Lascivious Mistress*, neither to lye by her, nor to be with her : He declined coming where she was, as much as possible : He did that which she should have done ; for she ought to have remov'd the alluring object out of her sight, and convert with any of her *Demesticks*, rather than him. we hold our fingers too near the

flame



flame, we shall incur the danger of being burnt. It is good to be in the way of Mercies, and to get out of the road of Temptation, as far as we can. If we would not be stuck with the poisoned arrow itself, we should not meddle with the feathers.

Twelfthly, A very sober and temperate use of lawful things. It is fit that our moderation should be known unto all men in our greatest visible abundance. They that go to their very utmost bounds, are too likely to run beyond them; because then there is but a step betwixt them and sin. If we alwayes take as much freedom as we may, it is a thousand to one, but that we sometimes are transported to take somewhat more. If we never deny our selves in any measure of that which we might enjoy,

12.

E

we

we shall find it an harder province than otherwise it might be, to keep our selves unspotted from the world. Memorials of the mischief of abus'd Prosperity, should be with us to restrain and regulate our use of it. If there were that *Inscription* over the Table in every House of Feasting, [*When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless, and beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God,*] and if the Guests were duely awed by it, so as to feed with fear, there would not be so many filthy brutes oftentimes in the shape of reasonable men. Holy Job was suspicious of the miscarriage of his Children at their merry entertainments, and therefore when those Festivals were gone about, he sent and sanctified them, and offer'd severally for them all; because

Deut. 8.  
10, 11.

because (sayes he) *It may be that* Job 1. 5. *my Sons have sinned, &c.* There is too great probability of our exceeding in such cases, and consequently it is the more safe and prudent course (which every Tender Heart will chuse) rather to *abridge* our selves of what we are permitted and allowed.

Moreover, *Compassion to the* 13. *Souls of other men,* is a necessary evidence of holy Tenderness: And this is to be discover'd in several Instances. As,

1. Refusing' to *make use of the* 1. *sins of others* for our own advantage. If we could save all that we have by another mans *lye*, or *perjury*, &c. we ought not to do it, but to declare and protest against it; and whoever silently *permits*, much more, whoever industriously *procures* any thing of that kind, may justly be sus-  
 E 2                      pected

pected to want that Tenderness with which he ought to be endued. If we must not *lye for God*, much less should it be done for the serving or securing of a private Interest. It were better that the World should be destroy'd, than the Order of it lost, which consists in conformity to Truth and Righteousness. That which is unlawful for me to do, I am not to put my Brother upon; for in this I shall act the part of Satan, and make his sin my own, though I do not personally commit it.

2. Not suffering sin upon others, where we can have any influence to reclaim them from it. How can we see any of our fellow-creatures falling into the fire of Hell, and our eye not affect our hearts so far, as to endeavour the pulling of them out? How can

can we see the Devil *leading captive* so many Souls at his own will, and not *muster up* all our force of *perswasive Arguments*, for the *bringing of them back*? If God do but *hold his peace*, when we are in trouble, and let our *Temporal Enemies* domineer a while over us uncontroul'd, we are ready to cry out, *Where is the sounding of thy bows* Isa. 63. *els*? His *tender Mercies* are 15. quickly call'd into question in such a case: And is there not more reason to doubt of our own, when others are in the hands of more dangerous *Spiritual Enemies*, and we do nothing towards the rescuing or freeing of them?

*Lamenting* for those, whom 3. we cannot reform. Our Lord set us an example in *weeping over Jerusalem*, because she would

*not know in her day the things of her peace.* To *grieve* over those miserable sinners, who are *straiten'd in their own bowels*, and harden'd against themselves, is a sign of *Tenderness of Heart*. The *Prophet* told the people of the *Jews*, that if they would not hear his publick Instructions, he should be a private *mourner* for their incorrigibleness. And *David*, when he beheld the *transgressours*, was grieved for them. 'Tis real matter of *sorrow* to see men distractedly *merry* in the most desperate circumstances, that will not be brought to themselves; to see a company of *Satans Prisoners in the bonds of iniquity*, that will not accept of the *Liberty* proclaim'd and purchast by the Redeemer.

Jer. 13.  
17:

Psal. 119.  
158.

4.

*Dealing gently with those in whom we find any hopeful disposition*

sition to Repentance. It is one thing to let men alone that have offended, and another thing to treat them, as if we were glad of the opportunity to vent our own pride, or envy, or wrath against them. Some take a mighty delight in aggravating and blackning the sins of others, as if their Reproach, rather than their Reformation, were the thing desired. Joseph used no such roughness, when he discover'd himself to his Brethren, and they were troubled at his presence; *Be not grieved (sayes he) nor angry with your selves (i.e. not immoderately) that you sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life.* He comforts them with the goodness of the event, when he might have insisted on the foulness of their crime. Such as have faulter'd through a spirit

Gen. 45.

Gal. 6. 1. *of infirmity, are to be restored with a spirit of meekness. In such cases we should be as unwilling to load them too much, or censure them too hard, as our*

Mat. I. 19 *Lords supposed Father, was to expose his real Mother. As a favourable God declares himself*

Ephes. 4. *ready to forgive, so will a tender*  
32. *hearted Christian be; much more*

*forward to heal, than to wound, and to take in a Penitent, than thrust out a Criminal. Mercy is Gods delight, and if we are like him, it must be ours. Mark, who was Nephew to Barnabas, had once deserted Paul, and the work he was engaged in; yet he*

Colos. 4. *orders the Colossians to receive*  
10. *him, if he came to them.*

5. *Yielding up any lesser privilege of our own, for the preventing of a greater injury and inconvenience to another. We are not*



to please our selves, but our neigh- Rom. 15.  
1, 2.  
bour for his good to edification;

though it be some detriment to  
our selves in an inferiour respect.

How much better is it to sacrifice  
a little *Carnal interest*, than by

our rigorous claim, to hinder  
any *spiritual good* ! What can

our *gain* be, to compensate for  
our Brothers *loss* ? Who can

reckon him to be truly tender  
and pitiful, or to have a just

sense of the worth of Souls that  
will not deny himself, as to some

sensual inclination, or *secular ad-*  
*vantage*, for the saving of his

Brother *eternally* ? This is not  
like the Spirit of *Paul*, whom a

ny times laid aside the exercise of  
his *lawful power*, to make him-

self more *useful* and *exemplary* to 2 Theff. 1.  
3. 9.  
the people. This is not like the

Spirit of *Moses*, who when God  
offered to make him the Head

Exodus  
32. 10.

of a Great Nation, if he would cease his *Intercession* for Israel, regarded their Publick Welfare, more than his Personal Dignity.

14.

Pl. 141. 5.

Again, A *thankful receiving of Reproofs* is a token of *Tenderness*. *Soft hearts* account the *smittings of righteous men* a more excellent Oil, than the *smoothest words* of deceitful flatterers. Those *filthy Sepulchres* that love to be painted, and daubed with *untemper'd mortar*, do certainly partake of the *hardness of stone*. None affect *pillows under their elbows*, but such as have a mind to *sleep on* in sin. If it be our desire and design to *walk worthy of God*, we shall rejoyce that any one will concern himself so far about us, as to admonish us, when we *walk disorderly*. How absurd is it to be dissatisfied with a *faithful reprovor*, unless

we

we have too much kindness to the *sin reprov'd* ? If the doing of those things which are *pleasing to God*, be our real *pleasure*, and the *grieving of his Spirit* the highest *grief* to us, how glad must we be to meet with a Friend that shews us the *error of our way* ? How welcome must his *wounds* be, who acquaints us with the truth of our case, and directs us to the most *safe and speedy cure* ? The *Wisdom which is from above* is recommended by this Character among others, that it is *easie to be intreated*. When Jam. 3. it is an *hard matter* to fasten se-<sup>17.</sup> rious Counsels upon men, or to make them bear some necessary Rebukes, it shews that *Folly is bound up too much in their hearts* still. He that would not be told when he *does amiss*, is never likely to *do well*.

In

15.

In the next place, An improvement of *those very Considerations to the mortifying of sin*, which others abuse to *cherish* it. Tender hearts are *melted* with the same Sun, whereby hard hearts are *harden'd more*. The *Goodness of God* encourages others in their *impenitency*, but *leads them to Repentance*. Divine *Patience* tempts others to *go on in their trespasses*, whereas they are invited by it to *break them off*. *Sparing Mercy* prevails more with them, than *punishing Justice* with the common Inhabitants of the World. That long-suffering which makes others *delay* their Duty, makes them to *apply themselves more diligently* to it. Wicked men alwayes argue perversely; 'If God hath *forborne me hitherto*, I may *presume upon it still*, and so follow  
low

Rom. 2.

4. 5.

'low my old course : Good men  
 argue after a quite contrary  
 manner ; ' Since that God hath  
 ' been so favourable to me, I  
 ' will be the more zealous to do  
 ' execution upon my Lusts. Some  
 turn the Doctrine of Grace into  
 a motive to *Lasciviousness* ; but  
 a Spirit rightly fram'd, makes  
 use of it as a spur to *Obedience*.  
*Paul* mentions the other un-  
 grounded conclusions with great  
 abhorrence ; *Shall we continue in* Rom. 6.  
*sin, that grace may abound ? God* <sup>1, 2.</sup>  
*forbid.* So, *shall we sin because* ver. 13.  
*we are not under the law, but un-*  
*der grace ? God forbid ?* Some  
 apply the *Bloud of Christ* to the  
 root of their Corruptions, as if  
 it were intended to keep them  
 alive, and make them fruitful ;  
 and they use the *Cross of Christ*  
 as a prop to the Devils Garri-  
 sons ; but where the Heart is  
 duly

Zech. 12.  
10.

duly softened, it will be an *Engine* or Instrument to break them down. The thoughts of a Crucified Redeemer work genuine Contrition, in those that are called according to Gods purpose; where the Spirit of Grace is poured out, men look upon Christ whom they have pierced, and mourn for him.

16. Lastly, A punctual attendance to the Divine Rule and Standard of all acceptable Religious Worship. We have been often urg'd, and do freely own ourselves oblig'd, to an exercise of Tenderness, in the case of *Disobedience to Authority*; but it can be no sin to refuse what another can have no authority to enjoyn. The charge of *Obstinacy* will not lye against us, till it be first made clear, that the Will of Man must regulate the Service of God,

God, and that a Creature is  
 Commissioned both to *invent*  
 and *impose* what the Creatour  
 shall approve, and his Wor-  
 shippers perform. The *Disciples*  
 of *Christ transgressed the tradition* Mat. 15. 2  
 of the *Elders*, and broke an Un-  
 scriptural Canon of the Jewish  
 Church, in *eating Bread with*  
*unwashed hands*: Yet our Saviour  
 does expressly vindicate them as  
 to this point, and pronounces,  
 that they were *not defiled* by it. ver. 20.  
 We have been likewise very  
 earnestly prest, and readily ac-  
 knowledge our selves bound to  
 study the *Unity of the Church*,  
 and to be tender of *tearing* and  
 rending it by needless Separati-  
 ons; but this Advice will be  
 bound to concern those that *cause*  
*divisions and offences*, for where Rom. 16.  
 of such offence is given, as creates 17.  
 of necessity of dividing, there  
 can

can be no sinful breach of Unity objected. If men apprehend the *terms of Communion* with others to be such, that they must either separate from *them*, or depart from the *Rule*, 'tis their manifest Duty to chuse the former rather than the latter. We are commanded to *live peaceably with all, as much as in us lies*. But we are not commanded to sacrifice *Truth* or *Purity* for Peace. And besides *Peace* may be preserved, though there be an unavoidable *difference* in Opinion (and consequently in Practice) through variety of light so long as persons do only judge for *themselves*, and maintain Christian *Charity* towards those whom they differ from. In short, the *Bible* is the *common measure* which all our Service should be directed by; and

Rom. 12.  
18.



we behave our selves in the House  
of God otherwise then that ap-  
points, we should reckon it a  
misbehaviour. We rush too hasti-  
ly into the Divine Presence, if  
we do not first seriously ask our  
own Hearts concerning those  
particular acts which we go a-  
bout, *Who hath required such* Isa. 1.12.  
*things at our hands?* For to do  
that which God hath not requi-  
red, may be as pernicious, as the  
leaving of what he hath requir'd,  
be undone.

The sixth Head, is to open, VI.  
wherein the *pleasingness* of this  
holy frame and disposition ta-  
ken God does appear. I shall men-  
tion only four instances of the  
truth of it, which as they are  
back'd by the frequent Experi-  
ence of Gods Servants, will be  
enough to prove, that a Tender  
Heart

Heart is most after his.

I. First, *Audience of Prayer.*

God listens more to the *chatterings* and *groans* of such persons endued with this gracious temper, than to all the *Rhetorick* and *Eloquence* of other men. Because thou hast humbled thy self when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and hast wept before me, (sayes God to Josiah here) I also have heard thee.

When Souls are wrought up to such a *softness* as this, God takes notice, with great delight of the least expression that drops from them. So Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet, and assures him that from the first day, that he

Dan. 10.

12.

begun to chasten himself before his God, his words were heard. The

Song 2.

14.

voice of Gods mourning Doves sweet in the Ears of Heaven. There is more harmony in those

broken

broken sighs than in the chiming  
 sound of ten thousands words that  
 proceed from feigned Lips. God  
 looks to those that tremble at his Isa. 66. 2.  
 word, with the highest compla-  
 cency, and all their desires are be- Pf. 38. 9.  
 fore him. This is argument e-  
 nough of his peculiar favour to  
 such; for though it be the com-  
 mon Duty of all persons to send  
 up their Petitions to God, it is  
 not the common Priviledge of all  
 to have them graciously receiv-  
 ed. David concludes that God  
 had not turn'd away his mercy -66. ult.  
 from him, because he had not  
 turn'd away his prayer. 11. do  
 Secondly, Preservation from 2.  
 abundance of guilt which others  
 fall into. Solomon spake as the  
 oracles of God, when he said,  
 happy is the man that feareth al- Prov. 28.  
 ways; for evils which overtake 14.  
 unawares are always the worst,  
 and

and do us the greatest mischief, but the *least danger* is from those that are *most suspected*. When Conscience is *laid wast*, it is the most deplorable state on this side of *Hell*: Men *run away* in to all manner of wickedness like *wild horses* with the bit in their mouths. They who are *passion*

Ephes. 4.  
19.

*feeling*, give themselves over to *work all uncleanness with greediness*. We see, that as no *heresies* are too gross to be believed, *scandal* no *villanies* are too black to be committed in the *Roman Church* where their hearts (like that of the *Leviathan*) are as firm as a *stone*, and hard as a piece of the *nether milstone*. [The Holy Ghost mentions the *nether*, because that being to bear the weight of the *upper*, is usually the *solidest* and strongest of the two.] None

Job 41.  
24.

Isa. 46. 12

are so far from righteousness, as a

the

of a Tender Conscience. 107

the stout-hearted. Judicial ob-  
scuration is therefore many times  
spoken of in Scripture, as the  
forerunner of destruction; this  
was the greatest plague which  
God sent upon Pharaoh; and  
in the case of Sihon, King of  
Heshbon, God harden'd his spirit,  
and made his heart obstinate, that  
the might cut him off. For this  
reason, the Church makes that  
bitterest complaint, *Oh Lord,*  
*why hast thou made us to err from*  
*thy wayes, and harden'd our hearts*  
*from thy fear?* Hardening of  
the heart from the fear of God, pro-  
duces that sad effect of erring  
from the wayes of God; and this  
is an afflicting token of Divine  
punishment. On the contrary, when  
we obey his fear, we are kept in his  
wayes, 'tis a mark of his favour:  
on his day we perceive that the Lord  
is among us, because ye have not  
com-

Ex. 9.14.

Deut. 2.

30.

Isa. 63.

17.

Josh. 22.

31.

committed this trespass against the Lord. Without doubt, if sin be the greatest evil, the prevention of it is the greatest act of mercy and good will. The mouth of a strange woman (sayes the Wise Man) is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall therein.

3. Thirdly, Special protection from threatening calamities. We read that Jehoiakim and his Courtiers, who were not afraid at the hearing of the terrible Roll, felt the Contents of it to their cost; whereas the Prophet, who in obedience to God, made Conscience of dictating, and Barnaby, who writ it, were both sheltered by Providence. How often have we seen, that they who would not make lyes their refuge, have found refuge in God, and such as never dared to hide themselves under

of a Tender Conscience.

1091

under falsehood, have been his  
hidden ones, in a peculiar man-  
ner! When other Hypocrites af-  
ford all their base prostitutions and  
ordid submissions, have been  
justly exposed, like the Courti-  
without the Temple, which was  
foretold to be given to the Gen-  
tiles. How many have depriv'd  
the Doctrine of Christ, only lest  
they should suffer persecution for  
the Cross of Christ, and God hath  
Righteously so order'd the event,  
that they have fail'd of their in-  
tention? Men that have aim'd  
at nothing else, but to be wise as  
serpents, have been stung to death  
by their own contrivance, when  
the more harmless Doves, and  
they that were simple concerning  
evil, have escap'd the Birds of  
prey. Devilish Wisdom creeping  
under the name and shadow of  
Christian Prudence, hath done  
more

Rev. 11.2



more mischief to mens *temporal* concerns, than the most are apprehensive of. *Joseph* was faithful to his trust, and kept his integrity, and fared the better for it at last, though he suffered a while; a false accusation threw him into Prison, but the Lord was with him, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of his keeper, who committed all into his hand, and that very confinement made way for his greater advancement in *Pharaohs Court*. The instance of *Mordecai* is rather more remarkable, who laid open himself, and the whole people of the Jews to the rage and malice of *Haman*, a great Courtier and Favourite with *Ahasuerus*, by not bowing, or doing reverence to him. The Reasons of this refusal, were not either *Pride*, or

Envy

Gen. 39.

21, 22,

23.

Esth. 3. 2.



of a Tender Conscience.

III

Envy against his particular person, or *contempt* of the Royal injunction, but he could not do it upon a Conscientious account; for 1. Many Learned Men do think that the respect requir'd, was not only *Civil*, but *Religious*; the *Kings of Persia* commonly expecting and receiving no less than *Divine Adoration* from their Subjects, which *Mordecai*, a *Jew*, had learnt to give to none, but *God only*. 2. This *Haman* was an infamously wicked man, and as such, he must needs be *contemned in the eyes of Mordecai*. 3. He was by Nation an *Amalekite*, of the race of *Agag*, who was *hewn in pieces* by *Samuel*, and God had oblig'd the *Israelites* to oppose that accursed people in all successive Ages; so that such *external honour* could not be paid to him

c. 7. 6.  
Pf. 15. 4.

Exodus  
17. 16.

Dent. 25.  
19.

F without

without sin. However this (as I said) was like to have had a very fatal issue ; but God seasonably and marvellously interposed ; *Hamans plot* was defeated, himself *hanged*, his Estate *confiscated*, the *Jews* delivered, *Mordecai* preferr'd, and they that were to be their *Executioners*, universally cut off.

4.

Fourthly, *Comfort in Death*. If they *perish*, yet their *expectation* does not ; if their *end* seem to be never so Tragical, as to the outward circumstances of it, yet they really *abound in hope*. So this *Josiah* in the Text, was according to the Divine Promise, *gathered to his grave in peace*, though he dyed in battle, because he was in a state of *reconciliation* to God, and the *last Enemy* could do him no hurt ; for if a good man expire in the

ver. 20.

open

## of a Tender Conscience.

113

open Field, and in the midst of the *sounding Trumpets*, and other *ratling Instruments of War*, yet *his end is peace*, and he *falls asleep* more quietly, than a sinner can do on his *bed of ivory*. This is the more observable, as to *Josiah*, because that *concluding act* of his Life, had something more of blame in it, than any other of his mentioned in the Bible : *He hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God*. It is true, that this pious Prince had no positive ground to believe what the *Heathen King* pretended, but rather might have some reason to mistrust a fallacy ; nevertheless, it would have done well, if he had *consulted God* about it, before he went to fight ; his neglect of doing this, was a *faulty omission*, and his untimely Death

2 Chron.  
35. 22.

immediately thereupon, may be lookt upon, not only as a *punishment* to his people, but a *rebuke* to him : And yet the *light* of Gods countenance shined through those *Evening Clouds*, and after he had his *mortal wound* he went *triumphant* to Heaven. Such *strong Consolations*, when the *flesh is failing* us, are the fullest evidence of Gods approving us: They whom he *smiles upon* in their dying moments, are his darlings indeed, and his doing it then, will be recompence enough, though he should *frown* upon us all our dayes before. If God lets his *servants depart in peace*, (like old *Simeon*) 'tis a mighty Mercy.

VII.

The *seventh General*, is to give the *Reasons* why this frame of heart does find such acceptance

ance with God. Several things might be alleadged to this purpose; but the four following are sufficient.

First, Because it is a *special fruit of his own Spirit*. God cannot take pleasure in any thing that's *ours*, (for all that's *born of the flesh*, must savour of corruption) but that which hath been planted and produced by himself, may very well be delightful to him. It is no strange thing for God to pass a sentence of approbation upon his *proper works*: At the finishing of the *Old Creation*, *Moses* very naturally concludes his account of it with this; *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*. But the *New Creation* in every part of it affords a much more rejoycing prospect to God, both as it is a

I.

Gen. I.  
31.

glorious conquest of greater *difficulties*, and as the issue of it expresses, a greater *conformity* to himself; for the *work* of Grace is not only beset with more obstructions, than those of *Nature*, but when it is brought to pass, the Divine Image is more clearly to be discerned in *it*, than in the best of *them*. This holy disposition therefore being the peculiar effect of the *operation* of God, is eminently grateful and pleasing to him upon that score.

2. Secondly, Because it is a *distinguishing Excellency*, which belongs to his *chosen people*, whereof the far greater part of the World is destitute. How few are there comparatively among high or low, that deserve such a *good report*, as is here given to this *King of Judah*! How much cause might we have upon the scrutiny,

scrutiny, to say, as the Preacher did, *One man among a thousand* Eccl. 7: 28. have I found ! How little does any such principle prevail in the general practice of mankind ! What is it, that hath met with more Contempt and Reproach, than this very thing, of *Tenderness of Conscience* ! As David was scorn'd and laugh't at, when he Psal. 69. 10. wept, and chastened his soul. How have the odious names of *Peevishness, Preciseness, and a Superstitious Understanding, &c.* been fasten'd upon it ! So far are many from a diligent exercising of Acts 24. 16. themselves to it, (as indeed they should, with the *Apostle Paul*,) that by the *prophanest sort of Drollery*, they have made it their business to discourage it in *others*. But for this very reason, it is the more amiable and lovely in Gods sight, when it appears in

his own Servants ; the *less 'tis regarded* by common persons, the *greater esteem* it hath with him.

That Holiness which is most rare, is most beautiful ; Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, being perfect in a very wicked generation.

Gen. 6.  
'8, 9.

3. Thirdly, Because it is the clearest proof of a living state. How unpleasant Objects must dead Souls be to a God that most frequently in Scripture swears by *his Life*, as an Attribute which he chiefly glories in ! What Converse or Communion can there be between him, the *Father of Spirits*, and gross and heavy Carcasses ? (For stupified sinners are no better than such.) So far as men are *past feeling* in the matters of Religion, they are truly void of Life ; when they have lost their sense of Sin  
and



and Duty, it shews that they are under the *power of Death*. We conclude things that are insensible, to be inanimate; so we cannot but suppose, that the *Life of God* is extinct, where all *Spiritual perception* is destroyed. The very first act of Divine *Quickening* is instantly manifested by this restored faculty of *discerning*; as soon as God hath *breathed upon our dry Bones*, we are that very moment furnished with *Tender Hearts*. But let none who complain of *remaining hardness*, rashly infer from hence, that they are not yet *made alive*; upon these two accounts, remembering that, 1. It is a considerable *degree of Tenderness*, to be *sensible of Hardness*. 2. The more our *Tenderness increases*, the more *sensible* we shall be of the *Hardness* which remains.

F 5 Fourthly,

4. Fourthly, Because this temper of Soul is the *highest pitch of sincerity*, and the *nearest approach to sinless perfection*. God will not communicate himself to any but such as *draw near with a true heart*, and we can have no better token to *assure our hearts* that they are true, than when we find them *tender*. God cannot be *displeased* with those that are *duely afraid of displeasing him*; for his *Eyes are upon the Truth*, and where such a fear is, 'tis impossible that there should be *prevailing Hypocrisie*. And then, it is the *furthest step* which we can take, towards that perfect Holiness, which is the *priviledge of Heaven*; such a constant *suspicion of sin*, and *watchfulness against it*, is the next remove to *being without it*. No *Militant Saint* is so like to a *Glorified one*.

as he that *flies from the least shadow* of evil, which he sees *pursuing* him; such an one is the livelyest resemblance of what *himself* shall be, when he comes to *sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God.* So that they who are *singing before his Throne*, can be but some degrees more acceptable to God, than these that serve him *trembling at his Foot.*

The *eighth* and last thing, is **VIII.** to *Apply* the whole, which I shall do, in a twofold *Use, viz.* of *Information*, and *Exhortation.*

First, By way of *Information*; *Use* **I.** in these four Branches.

First, We may reasonably *infer* from hence, that they who are *least concerned* about Gods displeasure, are the persons that  
*fall*

Num. 11.  
15.

Gen. 21.  
16.

*fall most under it. The hardened Sinners lot is the Reverse of all these good Tidings to the Tender-hearted. Such as live after the most secure and regardless manner, are Vessels of the hottest Wrath; none so wretched, as they that cry (like Moses in another case), Let me not see my wretchedness; none so manifestly past cure, as they that think themselves safe, when they can avoid Conviction; who run from the clamours of Conscience, as Hagar went at a distance from the cries of Ishmael. Men never expose themselves so much to the Indignation of God, as when they labour most industriously to stifle all apprehensions of it. Internal checks and admonitions are such a Mercy, as the crowing of the Cock was to Peter; and such as do not think them so,*  
and

and improve them accordingly, cannot hope, that there is any *Mercy in store* for them.

Secondly, It must needs be 2.  
the *Wisdom and Interest of Rulers* to shew favour and encouragement to *Tender Consciences*. (And it is at this day a *National Blessing*, that we have such over us, as are really convinc'd of it.) *Magistrates* are the *Ministers of God*; and therefore what is approv'd by God, should be countenanc'd by them. And there is nothing which can be more to their own Advantage, Reputation, or Establishment. What a loss, and dishonour, and danger would it be for a *Prince* to be served by none but those, that have cast off the fear of God, and so have loosened the principal bond of their *Allegiance* to man! What confidence can he put in those,

those, or what *success* can be expected from them, who have an Arbitrary Liberty of *doing any thing* which answers their purpose, or *leaving any thing undone* that's *unuseful* to themselves. Where the *ties of Conscience* are most *strictly held*, as the *Presence of God* may be best hoped for to give *success* to *Publick Managements*, so the *Trust* which is *reposed*, is *safest* from being *betray'd*.

3. Thirdly, Whatever *gainful circumstances* any persons are in which do any way *engage* them in the *unavoidable violation of Duty*, 'tis plain from this Doctrine, that they are *bound* to *alter* them; for *holy tenderness* must be maintained, though the *unlawful means of our subsistence* be *totally given up*. It would do well, if this were considered before

before hand by all, in the choice of their several *Professions* ; but where that *preventive Remedy* hath been omitted, *this* must be applied afterwards. Some are so strangely *involv'd* among a multitude of *snarcs*, that it is absolutely necessary to *quit the station* they are in, if they have a mind to be *disentangled* : And it behoves every one to reckon that *employment accursed*, which cannot be followed *without sin* ; yea, when a Christian finds it (though but almost) *invincibly difficult to abide with God in his Calling*, 'tis past all controverſie, I think, that he ought to leave it, and (not to live in *idleneſs* upon *Alms*, but) to take some other method, which is *more innocent*, and less *hazardous*.

Fourthly, This will teach us, 4.  
That those things which might perhaps

perhaps have some *laudable use* in their *first appointment* and observation, should be *laid aside*, when they come to be *perverted*. The *Brazen Serpent* which when first *made by Moses*, was the *Instrument* of a wonderful Cure, as well as a *significant Type* of Christ, and after that continued among the people for many years, as a *standing memorial* of the goodness of God ; yet in *Hezekiah's* dayes, when it was abused to *Idolatry*, he is commended for *breaking it in pieces*. The *Love-Feasts* among the *Primitive Christians* in the times of the *Apostles*, were originally celebrated, for the preservation and increase of mutual *Charity* and *Friendship* ; but when at length they became the occasions of notorious *disorder*, (which *Paul* begun to take notice of among

2 Kings  
18. 4.



among the *Corinthians*) they were justly-condemned and for-  
born by the Churches of Christ. I Cor. II. 21, 22.  
So the *Holy Kiss*, mentioned in several of the *Epistles*, which the Believers were wont to Greet one another with, (and which was an ancient custom of *Salutation* practised amongst the *Jews*,) was at last prudently forbidden and disused, in their Sacred *Assemblies*, when they saw that it opened a door to *Lasciviousness*. (As indeed *Religious Affections* are too prone to degenerate into *Carnal*, and that which begins in the *Spirit*, too often ends in the *Flesh*.)

Secondly, A word of Exhortation, which is this; Labour to obtain and preserve this blessed frame of Heart, which is of such great price in the sight of God.

In

In order to it, Take the ensuing  
*Directions.*

- I. First, Strive to *increase in Spiritual Knowledge.* Study to fill your *minds with Light*, if you would have your *hearts endued with Tenderness.* God never  
Deut. 29.  
4. gives an heart to perceive, but where he gives also an eye to see. It is observable, that they who were past feeling, and gave themselves over to a greedy working  
Ephes. 4.  
18, 19. uncleanness, (in the place before cited,) had their understanding darkened, and were alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them. Ignorance and stupidity, are very naturally linkt together; and it is to be expected, that where there is most blindness, there should be the greatest hardness. The main thing, which the notion of Conscience carries in it, is the apprehension

communication of general knowledge to particular actions; and therefore the less we know, the worse we are like to do.

Secondly, Make not your Knowledge useless, and neglect not the Light which God hath given you, by taking things upon trust from other persons. Why hath God furnisht you with a power of seeing, if he intended, that others should lead you blindfold? Wherein is this better, than groping at noon day, when we have the advantage of directing our own steps? He that receives the dictates of any other man, without examination, may swallow mortal Poison, instead of wholesome Food, and be lodged in the Chambers of Death before he is aware. The best and safest course, is to prove all things. We are not truly Gene-

2.

1 Theff.  
5. 21.

rons

rous Christians, unless we be like the noble Bereans, who searcht the Scriptures of the Old Testament, before they would credit the Preaching of the Apostles themselves, those Penmen of the New. Take heed therefore of being deceiv'd by the plausible engagements of others, to bear you harmless before God; there may be something of Rhetorick in that way of arguing, but nothing of Reason; for how can a Fellow-creature do this? Every one must bear his own burden; and it is not supposable for one Soul to be in another Souls stead.

Gal. 6. 5.

3. Thirdly, Let not Examples sway you so much as Precepts. If Barnabas had regarded Christs Gospel more than Peters practice (which he should have done) he had not been carried away with Judaizing dissimulation. If we guide

Gal. 2.  
13.

of a Tender Conscience.

131

guide our course by *presidents*, instead of *walking according to rule*, Conscience may soon be *shipwrackt*. The former *Governours* who had been before *Nehemiah*, were *chargeable* to the people, they had *opprest* them, and *insulted* over them, but *so did not he*, because of the fear of God. We must not be *frighted* and *scar'd* with the reproach of *singularity*; though all men should be *offended* in Christ, let us resolve *never to be offended*; but carry our selves like those two *mighty men* whom *David* had, that stood and opposed the *Philistins*, when the people of *Israel* were gone away and fled.

Neh. 5.  
15.

2 Sam.  
23.9, 10,  
11, 12.

Fourthly, *Decline all unnecessary converse with bad men*. The *Jews* would not go into the publick *Judgment-Hall*, when our Lord was arraign'd before *Pilate*,  
left

4.

John 18.  
28.

*lest they should be defiled by the company of the Gentiles which crowded there: They were jealous of a Ceremonial defilement, we have more reason to fear a Moral pollution by too near approaches to wicked men, when we may easily keep our selves at a distance from them. The Christians were commanded to hate*

Jude 23. *even the garments spotted with the flesh; and to manifest their hatred, by shunning all familiarity with such; in allusion to the Law of Moses, (as some think), that whosoever toucht the bed of*

Lev. 15. 5 *him that had a running issue, was to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean till the even. Sad experience may convince of the ruining hazard of accustomed society with prophane and carnal persons; if we venture our selves among those,*  
by

by whom Holiness is mock'd and derided, we may be too quickly brought to disapprove and condemn it also, and to sit down in the seat of the scornful with them.

Fifthly, Beware of lax interpretations of Scripture-Precepts.

5.

There is so great a Latitude allow'd in some Practical Divinity, that to steer by such conduct, would gradually destroy all the Tenderness, which we are oblig'd to maintain. Too many Guides of Souls have presumed to widen Christs strait Gate, and set the hedges of his narrow way at a greater distance. Laodicean lukewarmness hath been represented as no absolute sin, but rather of an indifferent nature (as if to be neither hot nor cold, were equivalent with neither good nor bad), though God threatens it with spewing out of his mouth.

Rev. 3.  
16.

The

Mat. 12.  
36.

The *third Commandment* hath been expounded to extend to a *forbidding of nothing but Perjury*; which the *vain Swearer* will be glad to catch at. Our Saviours prohibition of *idle words*, hath been restrain'd to *malicious reproaches* of Religion, and the means to confirm it; whereby some may hope the better to justify (or at least to excuse) their *foolish talking*, and unprofitable Discourse. I instance only in these things, as a *specimen* of those Doctrines, which are accommodated to a very ill purpose; but if we would keep our hearts tender, we must consider the Divine Law as a Rule of the *highest perfection*.

6. Sixthly, *Cherish* the most *wilifying and debasing thoughts* of yourselves. They that walk most *humbly*, will walk most *circumspectly*

Lowlineſſe



## of a Tender Conscience.

135

Lowliness of mind is a great promoter of Tenderneſs of heart. He that is already vile in his own eyes, is likely to take the most ſedulous care, that he may not make himſelf more vile by ſin. The ſpirit of God ſpeaks of Nebuchadnezzars mind being hardened in (or by) pride. And the Dan. 5. 20. Ps. 75. 5. ſalmiſt admoniſhes the wicked ſouls of his time, not to lift up their horn on high, or ſpeak with ſtiff neck. It is a Metaphor taken from thoſe untamed Creatures, which will not ſtoop, or bow their heads to receive the yoke; ſo arrogant and lofty Souls ſhould not be too ſtraitly kept under Divine Government, as they thought it their eſſential right, to take the freedom ſometimes of doing their own pleaſure, and walking after their own imaginations.

G

Se-

Mat. 12.  
36.

The *third Commandment* hath been expounded to extend to *forbidding of nothing but Perjury* which the *vain Swearer* will be glad to catch at. Our Saviour's prohibition of *idle words*, hath been restrain'd to *malicious proaches* of Religion, and means to confirm it ; where some may hope the better to stifle (or at least to excuse) their *foolish talking*, and unprofitable Discourse. I instance only these things, as a *specimen* those Doctrines, which are commodated to a very ill purpose ; but if we would keep our hearts tender, we must consider the Divine Law as a Rule of *highest perfection*.

6. Sixthly, *Cherish the most refining and debasing thoughts of yourselves*. They that walk most humbly, will walk most circumspect

Lowli

Lowliness of mind is a great promoter of Tenderness of heart. He that is already vile in his own eyes, is likely to take the most effectual care, that he may not make himself more vile by sin. The Spirit of God speaks of Nebuchadnezzars mind being hardened in (or by) pride. And the Psalmist admonishes the wicked fools of his time, not to lift up their horn on high, or speak with a stiff neck. It is a Metaphor taken from those untamed Creatures, which will not stoop, or bow their heads to receive the yoke; so arrogant and lofty Souls would not be too straitly kept under Divine Government, as if they thought it their essential right, to take the freedom sometimes of doing their own pleasure, and walking after their own imaginations.

Dan. 5.  
20.

Pf. 75. 5.

7. Seventhly, *Watch against formality in Gods Service* : Going on in a *beaten road* of Duties after a lifeless manner, tends to make the heart like the *way side*.

*Solomon* giving an account of the *Harlot's* assaulking the young man, tells us, that *with an impudent face she said unto him, I have peace-offerings with me, this day I have paid my vows*. It seems, that she had an external *form of Godliness*, and kept up a reputation of Religion by *Temple-worship*, and by doing so, she grew the *more bold* and daring in her wickedness, and *shook off* all that remorse which might otherwise have *siez'd and fasten'd* upon her. This is very evident in the case of the *Jews* during the *Captivity*; for *seventy years* together they held on a course of *fasting and mourning*, but

Prov. 7.  
13, 14.

Zec. 7. 5.

of a Tender Conscience.

137

but did not at all fast unto God, and the issue of it was, that they made their hearts as an adamant-stone. A superficial discharge of Duties does abundance of harm in wearing away the sense of sin. ver. 12.

Eighthly, Take heed of lying 8.  
under any guilt unrepented of, or of relapsing into sins whereof you have formerly repented. This tends to brawn and fear the Conscience, and to abate that quickness of perception which is our great advantage. It is very remarkable, that Peters standing and warming himself among the Servants and Officers in the High-Priests Hall, after he had denied his Master once, is mentioned twice by the Holy Ghost; for if instead of doing so, he had gone out immediately, and bewail'd his sin (as he did afterwards),

John 18.  
18, 25.

Heb. 3.  
13.

Acts 15.  
20.

Neh. 5.  
11.

wards), he might have escap'd the snare of his *second and third Denials*. Delayes in such cases are alwayes pernicious ; this is clearly hinted by the *Apostle* ; *Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened, &c.* Long custom brought some of the believing *Gentiles* to look upon *Fornication* as a thing indifferent, which makes the *Apostolical Council* at *Jerusalem* to prohibit it among other things of that kind. And therefore, when *Nehemiah* had rebuk'd the *Nobles and Rulers*, for exacting of their poorer Brethren, he bids them to *restore to those whom they had so oppress'd, their Lands and Houses, &c. even this day*. Evasions might have been found out to frustrate his advice, if it were not instantly followed. *Putting off Repentance,*

ance, and frequent *Back slidings*, corrupt the frame of the heart, and lead to forgetfulness of God.

Ninthly, Let nothing tempt you to go against the dictates of Conscience, or to act with the least *reluctancy and hesitation* upon your own Spirits. As in those things, which we positively apprehend to be *sinful*, so where we cannot satisfy our selves that they are *lawful*, it behoves us to *suspend* and forbear, till we have clearer light and information. They who think and teach, that the doubts of private persons are to be over-ruled by the injunctions of Superiours, lay down very different measures from the Apostle; Let every man be fully persuaded Rom. 14. in his own mind. And again, 5. Whatsoever is not of faith, is *sin*. ver. 23.

Can we now suppose, that the Spirit of God order'd us to *acquiesce* in what another commands, for no other reason, but *because he commands it*, and to *believe* the lawfulness of an Humane Prescription, when we cannot personally *discern* it? Does not the *good* and *evil* of our actions remain *unalterable*, and yet must the meer *exercise of power* turn the scale, and be enough to resolve our *scruples*, or scatter our *Objections*? Can *that alone* settle our perplexed minds, when it is *confest*, that the *nature of the things* commanded, is not changed? Certainly the administering and taking down of such *Opiates* as these, is very *disserviceable* to real Religion.

1C. 2

Tenthly, *Fortifie* your selves against *carnal fear*, and an *effeminate*



minate sense of *outward danger*.  
 Fix it upon your Souls, that as  
*Souldiers* of Christ, you are  
 bound to *endure hardnes*. Let  
 not a prospect of the *greatest*  
*sufferings* terrifie you into the  
*least compliances*. Indeed they  
 who can support a Profession  
 with outward prosperity, are  
 commonly accounted the *wise in*  
*Christ*; but at the end they will  
 appear to be mistaken fools;  
 for the *smallest wound in the Spi-*  
*rit*, is worse than the sharpest  
*thorn in the Flesh*, and is gene-  
 rally acknowledg'd so to be,  
 when the *time of healing* is past.  
 Remember, that your business is  
 to *commend your selves to God*,  
 your *Father in Heaven*, though  
 your *Mothers Children* upon  
 Earth be *angry with you*, and  
 though *Brethren hate*, and *cast*  
*you out* for his Names sake. It

2 Tim. 2. 3.

1 Cor. 4. 10.

is a Truth, which long observation hath confirm'd, that they  
 Deut. 28. who are tender of suffering (like  
 56. the delicate woman) are for the  
 most part bold in sinning.

II. Eleventhly, Live as under the  
 continual view of God. Set him  
 alwayes before you, who hath  
 Rev. 2. 23 said, All the churches shall know,  
 that I am he, which searcheth the  
 reins and hearts. He who consi-  
 ders this seriously, will renounce  
 the hidden things of dishonesty,  
 as much as the most gross and  
 palpable Injustice; and when  
 he might make an advantage of  
 anothers ignorance or oversight,  
 and defraud without discovery  
 or suspicion, he will not do it.  
 He is withheld from cursing the  
 deaf, because God hears, and  
 from putting a stumbling block  
 before the blind, because God sees.  
 The Holy Apostle did not corrupt  
 the

Ley. 19.  
 14.

the word of God, and adulterate Sacred Truths in his Ministry, as many did, because he spoke alwayes as in the sight of God. And perhaps this may be one reason, why Glorified Saints in Heaven can sin no more, because they are influenc'd so vigorously and effectually by the full and immediate, and constant Vision of God; the removal of tempting objects from them is not so much, as the presence of such an awful object with them.

In the last place, Pray without ceasing for renewed aids from God against every motion of sin, and assault of temptation. It hath been intimated before, that he who makes the heart soft at first, must keep it so afterwards; and therefore this work of Grace cannot be better strengthen'd, or more prosperously advanc'd, than by

2 Cor.  
2. ult.

12.

2 Chron.  
18. 21

by diligent application of our selves to the Throne of Grace. The way to be secur'd from sinful falls, is to be much upon our Knees. The more we converse with God in this Duty, the greater succour may we expect from him. The disuse of this will weaken and endanger us more than any thing besides ; it will slacken those restraints under which our Spirits ought to be held, and render us more apt to listen to the charms of our own Lust, and to the proposals of Satan: Asa conquered an huge host, by seeking to God ; but was baffled by less force, when he trusted too much to Humane assistance. So 'tis frequently seen, that sleighter temptations prevail against us, when we think to encounter them by our selves, after we have been victorious o-  
ver

2 Chron.  
16.<sup>8</sup>.

ver stronger Corruptions by calling upon God for help. If therefore we would give no place to the Devil, nor his Works, 'tis necessary, that we should give our selves to Prayer.

To conclude all, Let me beseech every one that Readeth, not to receive this word in vain, by conferring with Flesh and Blood. If the World do tell you, that the governing of your selves by such nice Rules and Methods, will be vexatious and troublesome, you may be assured of the contrary, from the faithful Word of God, and the Seals which have been set to it by many thousands. To that end, consider these two things well, as an Antidote against the Venome, which others would infuse.

First,

- (1.) First, That the most *strictly Conscientious* may best expect to have the *sweetest calm* in their own minds. A Conscience most *void of offence*, is thereby entitled and qualified to be most *free from terrour*. The sorrows of Saints are therefore in the *fit-  
John 16. 20. ost time* alwayes turned into joys; and the surest and most *durable* comforts are never too *hastily* obtained. It is beyond all *controversie*, that *no peace* for a while, is better than a *false peace* without interruption: *Acute Pains* are much safer than some *stupifying Remedies*; for *present Grief* will make way for *ever-  
lasting Tranquillity*. An *Eminent Person* hath lately given testi-  
mony to this Truth; Sometimes *(says he)* a great *Tenderness of  
Mind, joyned with a deep Sense of Duty*, will raise sad reflections  
in

Bish. of  
Sarum's  
Serm. at  
the Fun. of  
the Lady  
Brook.  
pag. 13.

## of a Tender Conscience.

147

in those, who have the justest cause of rejoycing alwayes in God; but such eloudy thoughts, though they may disquiet them a little, yet have a good effect upon them, &c.

Secondly, They who are un- (2.)  
affected with a sense of guilt, when it is fresh upon them, will be lasht for it afterwards to their greater torment. Many sins which we easily pass over in the heat of Temptation, are an offence of 1 Sam. heart to us in our cooler Thoughts. 25. 31.

Darius, against the convictions of his own mind, was perswaded by his Courtiers to throw Daniel into the den of Lyons, but Dan. 6. 18, 19. he could neither eat nor sleep, till he fetcht him out. The longer 'tis before we recover our feeling, the worse shall we be stung at last. When some of the Christians were surpriz'd by one of Julians Artifices to cast Frankincense

*incense upon his Altars, and came to review what they had done, and understood, that their Enemies construed it to be a Renunciation of Christ, they exprest the utmost rage against themselves, (as well as just resentment of the Emperors cheat) and even desired to be committed to the flames. To shut up the whole, let this dwell upon our minds, that That Worm which can never dye, will at some time or other, make all men wish, that they had been more Tender, by way of prevention.*

F I N I S.





*Books lately Printed for John  
Salusbury, at the Rising  
Sun near the Royal Ex-  
change in Cornhil.*

**S***X* Sermons on several Oc-  
casions. By *T. Cruso*.

*The Christian Laver* : Or, a  
Discourse concerning the nature  
of Participation with, and the  
necessity of Purification by  
Christ. By the same Author.

An end of Doctrinal Contro-  
versies, which have lately trou-  
bled the Churches by Reconcil-  
ling Explication, without much  
Disputing. By *R. Baxter*.

The Mirrour of Divine Love  
unvail'd ; in a Poetical Para-  
phrase of the high and mysteri-  
ous

ous *Song of Solomon* ; where-  
unto are added several other  
Poems, being Miscellanies and  
Pindariques. By *Rob. Fleming*.

A New Survey of the Com-  
mon-Prayer.

A Rational Defence of Non-  
Conformity, wherein the pra-  
ctice of Nonconformists is vindi-  
cated from promoting Popery,  
and mining the Church, impu-  
ted to them by Dr. *Stillingfleet*,  
Bishop of *Worcester*, &c. By  
*Gilbert Rule*, D. D.

The Conformists Sayings, &c.

An Enquiry after Religion,  
&c. by a Late Gentleman of the  
*Royal Society*.

er  
d  
.